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# DIRTBIKE



## **RC, MC & JD!**

THE TESTING TIMES  
OF TONY MARSHALL

## **OUT OF THE BLUE!**

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# CONTENTS

## REGULARS

- 012 NEWS**  
The best off-road news around, a bunch of chances to win top swag plus Gordy and Swordy's latest columns...
- 021 PRO PROBE**  
Bubba bounces back your questions in our monthly meander around the minds of men who race motocross for money
- 023 MANO O MANO**  
It's an all-French affair as Bud Racing's Gautier Paulin and David Vuillemin take our intrepid test of testicular fortitude
- 025 BLARNEY**  
Champions are crowned and Stevie Mills is chased by a hound – it's all happening on the Emerald Isle...
- 027 JONTY'S BOX**  
The French have already given us French bread and the French tickler – now they're exporting enduro stars too!
- 029 RANT**  
If you've written it and we've read it then it's probably in 'ere, innit!
- 030 STUFF**  
Brand-new bits to brighten your day
- 058 BURNICLE'S BEAT**  
Jack takes us back to the marvellous, magical, magnificent Maggiora...
- 076 DBR STATESIDE**  
Who's who on the US des Nats squad, AMA race action and Max and Matthes' monthly columns – yee haw!
- 090 MIND GAMES**  
Makin' movies in your mind could be the essential route to eternal success
- 094 WALKER'S WORLD**  
Biccies and coffee keep our Tech Ed happy as he pimps Sean's ride...
- 139 RAGE**  
Connor Clark and David Keet featured plus hotter than hot EYC and BYMX race action
- 144 MAC 211**  
Billiam has a big decision to make – another year with CAS Honda in the GPs or a fresh start in Australia. Willy stay or Willy go?

## FEATURES

- 036 MIND GAMES!**  
Yamaha's 2010 YZ450F is most definitely radical and revolutionary but is it any good?
- 044 OUT OF THE BLUE!**  
After scoring three world titles with Yamaha it seems the future's orange for Tony Cairoli
- 052 PRIZE FIGHTER!**  
Has the best bike of 2009 got even better?
- 062 GAP YEAR!**  
Billy Mac talks candidly about his racing career and possible future Down Under...
- 068 FINNISHED!**  
Recently retired Finn Samuli Aro's one of the greatest off-road racers of all time so let's celebrate the career of the five-time world champion
- 098 CASTLE COMEBACK!**  
That dastardly dirt bike demon Dickie Dye dabbles in racing again – will he ever learn?
- 106 RC, MC AND JDI!**  
In 12 years of testing bikes for DBR Tony Marshall's ridden the lot – from factory firepower to the Shed of Dread
- 116 ROAD HOGS!**  
STR Honda's James Noble gives road racing a try at the Ron Haslam Race School
- 120 TRAVELLING MAN**  
Kiwi Scott Columb talks about love, life and lots more including ping-pong and dogging...

## REPORTS

- 124 MXGP**  
Musquin finally nails down the MX2 title in Brazil while The Panda strikes back in MX1
- 126 BRIT MX**  
Landrake hosts the final round of the Maxxis championship – talk about saving the best for last!
- 128 WEC**  
Knigher finally wins one as the WEC wraps up in France
- 130 RED BULL PRO NATIONALS**  
Bradshaw and Nunn take titles in taurine-tastic Wakes Colne cliffhanger





**COVER:** Believe it or not, Tony Marshall has been testing bikes for us since 1997! Here our tenacious test titch throws out one last whip for the DBR camera – we'll miss working with you mate...  
© Suttty

**CONTENTS:** LPE Kawasaki's Kristian Whatley gets on the gas as he chases MMX gold at Culham!  
© Suttty









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CHAD REED



# COMMENT

A few weeks ago I found myself lead-footing it along the A14 in DBR Advertising Direktor Delicious Debs' company Bimmer, risking life, limb and licence as I dashed down to Ipswich to interview Tony Marshall, our main MX test rider for the last 12 years.

If you measure civilisation by its proximity to some sort of motorway-style blacktop then Ipswich is just about the closest you can get in this country to medieval England and the deeper into Suffolk I plunged the more DD's motor appeared to morph from a James Bond 'spycar' (her words, not mine) to HG Wells' Time Machine. As cross-eyed peasants in smocks toiling in fields and comely wenches herding geese flashed by outside, comfortably cocooned in the 21st Century I chilled out to the soothing sounds of The Ramones and eagerly anticipated my arrival in the back-end of beyond (before any Ipswichianites put quill to paper to complain, I should maybe point out that I'd embarked upon my epic journey from Morecambe – without doubt the arse-end of nowhere).

But back to my tale...

I was eagerly anticipating my arrival for a number of reasons. The first was dead simple – Tony's a good mate and for one reason or another our paths don't cross often enough. The second was that whenever our paths do cross – the bar of the Hard Rock Café in Vegas, downtown Reykjavik, various MXdNs and GPs etc etc etc – Jack Daniels always seems to come along for the ride. But the third – and main – reason was that Tony's decided to step down as DBR tester and I was on a mission to do his loyal service justice with a s\*\*t-kicking tribute.

A combination of his increasing workload (Tony is Business Development Manager for Guy Nicholls' Fork Rent empire) and ongoing knee problems has caused him to call time on his testing duties for DBR. And judging by the way he was limping on both legs and on and off the blower for most of the evening I can't really blame him. A multiple schoolboy champ whose adult career was ended prematurely after a string of injuries, Tony's speed, style and innate understanding of how technological advances affect on-track performance (plus his unrivalled aesthetic appreciation of hot new decals) made him a brilliant test rider and it's been a real privilege to work with him over the nine years I've been at the helm of DBR.

We had a great evening reminiscing about all the stoopidity we've got up to at events and bikes launches over the years – I laughed long and hard when he reminded me of how my crash-damaged plums turned black during the course of a Transatlantic flight back from the YZ400F launch in '98 (although I'm still not sure the air hostess was all that amused by my request for something to kill the pain but leave the swelling). Anyway, our special tribute to Tone starts on P106 in this month's mag – I hope I've done him justice...

Eagle-eyed readers will have already noticed in last month's mag who Tony's replacement is. As sad as I am to see Tony go, I'm also delighted to welcome Jeff Perrett back into the fold. The Godfather of Goon Riding (and the Tsar of Twisted 7), Jeffery's been wandering in the journalistic wilderness recently. But utilising a tracking chip placed under his skin a few years ago after he slipped his lead and subjected the pony population of the New Forest to a sustained reign of terror, we managed to locate then lure him back to DBR with a trail of broken ginger biscuits and empty promises of 'respect', 'integrity' and 'money'. Jeff's been busy this month with tests of the latest 450 four-bangers from Kawasaki and Yamaha – keep turning the pages and you'll come across them...

It's been WFO at DBR this month. On top of more regular office-based activities (boo-jumping, Jaffa Cake thievery, the how much designer Large Marge will spend at Greggs sweepstake) and as well as my jaunt to Ipswich, Sully and I saddled up Trandawg™ and undertook a marathon one-day round trip of almost 700 miles to Landrake in Cornwall for the final round of the Maxxis series. With both titles decided it could have been a bit of a humdrum affair but the battle for second in the MX2 division provided the best racing I've seen for years. Nev Bradshaw was desperately unlucky to miss out on the silver medal after a stellar season for DB Racing Honda but after his epic charge from last to 10th it was Jake Nicholls' drive, determination and downright doggedness that won the day. Expect big things from the 19-year-old next year – you'll not meet another rider who has The Reverend's will to win.

Landrake was 'supposedly' (and I use that world on purpose) a selection day for the final place on the British MXdN team after Carl Nunn picked up an injury following his call-up to the national squad for the biggest motocross race in the world. The berth alongside Tommy Searle and Billy MacKenzie was 'supposedly' (and I'm still using that world on purpose) between Shaun Simpson and Stephen Sword who had both moved up to 450s for the 'supposed' showdown. At the end of the day it was Swordy on top of the podium but Simpson on the team – I'm not exactly sure how that works but maybe the powers-that-be should be a little more, er, up front with their thought processes? Whatever, either Swordy or Simpson alongside Tommy and Billy Mac make for a strong team. Sadly, the way this month's deadline's fallen you'll have to wait for our next issue to see how they got on – unless, of course, you've already checked out our special online MXdN coverage at [www.dirtbikerider.com](http://www.dirtbikerider.com)

Finally, a big helping of (strictly non-contact) man-love to our carrot-crunching contributor JP O'Connell who gets hitched this month to the cracking Cork. May you have a long and happy life together...

*Sean*



Tony and Jeff – like Dumb and Dumber (only dumberer)

Catch Mike Alessi in SX action at the NEC



Kane canes 'em!

That's 15 out of 10 for wrongness!





# NEWSH UND!

ALL THE LATEST OFF-ROAD NEWS AND GOSSIP FRESH  
FROM THE KENNEL OF OUR K-9 NEWS COLLECTOR...

If you've rushed to your local newsagents or WHSmith store on DBR delivery day hoping to find all the best images and stories from the Motocross des Nations then we're sorry to disappoint you but due to print slots and stuff you'll have to wait until next month to see all of that!

But don't despair because if you go online to [www.dirtbikerider.com](http://www.dirtbikerider.com) there's a plethora of awesome pics, stories and videos from the 63rd running of the MXdN so check it out. We have got a UK-exclusive first test of the 2010 YZ450F for you this month though and it's as radical as owt so take a good long stare at that when you reach it later in the mag...

Something else you really need to see is The Red Bull Rivals TV show that's due to be screened on the morning of **October 10** on Channel 4. The show features ex-Hollyoaks actors Max Littler and Darren Jeffries taking on different extreme challenges and this week the intrepid travellers take on the endurocross-style prologue at the Red Bull Romaniacs with hilarious consequences. If you miss it on the telly then fear ye not because the programme will be available to view online at [www.channel4.com/programmes/4od...](http://www.channel4.com/programmes/4od...)

It seems that the whole country is gripped with endurocross fever at the moment with the opening round of the IEWC series rocking Sheffield's Hallam FM Arena on **October 31!** Top riders who have confirmed they'll be there so far include David Knight, Dougie Lampkin, Graham Jarvis, Taddy Blazusiak, Mike Brown and reigning champion Ivan Cervantes. With world cup points up for grabs and many personal scores to be settled – expect fireworks between Knight and Taddy – it should be a night to remember. For tickets call the Hallam FM Arena hotline on **0114 256 5656** now!

As well as the pro level guys there are support classes for ACU licence holders of all ages and skill levels and those competitive types who are looking to gain an extra edge will be keen to know that FatCat Motoparc supremo Martin Craven and his rusty but trusty sidekick Mark Jackson will be offering an intense endurocross training school on **October 18** at FatCat which is situated just off junction 4 of the M18 near Doncaster.

The Monster Energy-supported school is aimed at clubman riders who may have always fancied attacking endurocross obstacles but were a little unsure the best way to go about it. Well, for the bargain price of just £35 – which includes refreshments at high noon – the six-hour school should help all riders build skills and confidence too. Call Martin on **07990 514509** for more details...

It's been another good month for Ulster lassie

Natalie Kane who wrapped up the British ladies' championship with a stunning performance at Landrake where another effortless double win confirmed her place as Britain's dominant female racer. After spending two successful seasons with the MVR-D Suzuki squad Natalie will be headed to pastures new next year as she's all set to join Roger Magee's Red Bull KTM UK outfit for an attack on world championship glory.

"She's already easily the best British girl and also finished third in the world," says Roger. "I believe that with a better bike and better preparation we'll be able to push her career forwards and by giving her a great overall package we feel that she'll be able to bring the world championship home."

Other exciting transfer news confirmed this month is the move of MX2 British champion Stephen Sword to the Buildbase CCM squad where he'll replace Factory Fatty Suttly who so far remains unsigned for '10. Josh Coppins is reported to have done a deal with Aprilia, De Dycker's headed to Ricci Racing Yamaha and CAS currently remain riderless as MacKenzie's still unsure if he wants to stay home or race in Australia for Kawasaki next year...

That's not the only Aussie/Kawasaki link up we've got for you though because the word from our Canadian cohort Steve Matthes is that Chad Reed riding for Monster Kawasaki is a done deal! Can the Thunder from Down Under steal James Stewart's glory as he goes for gold on Bubba's old bike? Who knows – I guess we'll have to wait until Anaheim 1 to figure that one out.

The AMA Supercross series kicks off on January 9 in Angels Stadium and if Swedish meatball Stefan Elvin has his way then you'll be there to witness one of the most eagerly awaited supercross battles in history on one of his firkin' fantastic Ride Trips. Email Stefan at [info@mxheaven-usa.com](mailto:info@mxheaven-usa.com) to check availability on upcoming trips because as the #1 choice in Californian riding holidays he's a busy little beaver with race fans and riders travelling from right around the world to do some sightseeing and riding at Stefan's MX Mecca. The facility has grown so much it's now regularly used by top pros including James Stewart, Grant Langston and Tommy Searle. For a better idea of what MX Heaven USA can offer you log on to [www.mxheaven-usa.com](http://www.mxheaven-usa.com)

Before all those shenanigans though there's a whole heap of excellent off-road action to consume. Starting this weekend (**October 9,10,11**) we have the Weston Beach Race, the aforementioned IEWC at Sheffield on Halloween and then it's time for the only purely off-road exhibition in the whole of Europe – the Dirt Bike Show at Stoneleigh Park.

Running from **November 5-8** the show sensationally promises to offer a whole new look and feel this year as instead of brand new bikes being displayed by the manufacturers some of the top teams from the world of MX, trials and enduro will be showcasing their race rigs and machinery in the main hall.

That's not to say that all the 2010 machines will be unseen though because every major model of production dirt bike from Beta, CCM, Gas Gas, Honda, Husaberg, Husqvarna, Kawasaki, KTM, Sherco, Suzuki and Yamaha will be present to peruse along with brand-new race kit from all the usual suspects. There'll also be plenty of bargains to be bagged in the trade halls plus the return of TV favourite Kickstart in the Live Action arena. Bargain priced advance tickets are on sale now – until **November 1** – and you can get yours by calling **0844 581 0735**.

Almost three weeks after the DBS closes its doors the Carole Nash NEC Bike Show '09 opens its and for the first time ever there's gonna be a dedicated off-road zone with a supercross arena. Running from **Nov 27 to Dec 6** the CNNECBS will have all the latest off-road bikes, kit, hot babes and related paraphernalia you could ever hope to shake your stick at plus the opening two rounds of the Future West British supercross championships on **November 28 and December 5**.

With AMA star Mike Alessi leading the entry for round one the racing should be sensational as he goes up against FWSX series regulars Carl Nunn, Mike Brown, Nev Bradshaw, Elliot Banks-Browne and Kristian Whatley! And there's more than just the pro classes too as the amateurs, youth and quad racers will also be battling it out in bar-to-bar action. Both supercross and CNNECBS tickets are available online from [www.theticketfactory.com](http://www.theticketfactory.com) or by calling **0844 338 8000**.

And finally... Congratulations to Marvin Musquin on wrapping up the MX2 world title in Brazil, Tom Church for finishing a career best 15th in the MX1 WC standings and David Knight for winning the last round of the WEC in France. A special mention must also go out to The Reverend Jake Nicholls whose never-say-die attitude paid dividends at Landrake as a last-to-10th charge with no front brake secured the speedy Suffolk teenager second place in the MX2 British championship. Speaking of Landrake, did everyone see the 15-second board guy employed to do the duties for the Dirt Bike Bitch-backed ladies' races? We're all for a bit of sexual equality here in the DBR offices but c'mon...







# WIN!WIN!WIN!

SIMPSON SWAG AND NEC PASSES MUST BE WON!

**W**e've teamed up with the **NEC Motorcycle Show** to give readers the chance to win an awesome prize that no amount of money can buy!

How does an exclusive training session with factory **Red Bull KTM** rider **Shaun Simpson** sound? Good, huh? And on top of that, what about his one-off, custom-made Alpinestars race shirt as worn by Shaun during his MX1 outing at the final round of the Maxis series at Landrake? It just couldn't get any better! But it can! Because one lucky reader will win all the above PLUS a pair of passes for the NEC preview day on **November 27!**

Running from **November 27** to **December 6** at the **Birmingham NEC**, The Carole Nash Motorcycle and Scooter Show now has a major off-road presence with a whole hall devoted to everything we love about dirt bikes. And the new hall is also home to the track for the Future West British SX championships which stages its

opening two rounds there on **November 28** and **December 5**.

To be in with a chance of winning all you need to do is let us know the name of Shaun's famous father.

**Is it:** **A:** Homer Simpson  
**B:** Bart Simpson  
**C:** Willie Simpson  
**D:** Groundskeeper Willie

Once you've decided on your answer point your PC at **www.dirtbikerider.com** where you need to follow the competition link, type in your answer, fill out the fields and hit transmit. The comp closes at noon on **November 5** with the first correct entry chosen totally at random getting all the swag. Five runners up will also each receive a pair of passes for the NEC preview day.

For more NEC show information go to **www.motorcycleshow.co.uk**





## WHERE'S CYRIL?

FIND DESPRES AND WIN A SHARK SKIDDER

This month thanks to our premier pals at Nevis Marketing we've got yet another top-of-the-range **Shark SXR Cyril Despres replica** skid lid worth a whopping **£229.99** to give away.

We've beheaded the French rally raid legend and hidden his disembodied head elsewhere in the pages of this issue of DBR (the one below is a serving suggestion for illustration purposes only). If you can spot it then you could win the helmet – simple, eh?

All you have to do is locate Cyril's napper and then text the word **DBRCYRIL** followed by a space, the page number, another space and then your name and postcode to **81800**. You'll receive a text back confirming your entry to this competition.\*

Entries close on **November 5** with the first correct entry chosen at random getting the Shark skidder in a size of their choice...



## GOLDENPAD

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If you're going to go bar-to-bar then you better hope the bars in question ain't no soft steel stockers that'll bend quicker than an Argos awning when Whirlwind Willy whistles through the pits. In fact, you should be wringing reet robust Renthals and now just maybe you can...

Have a close look at our pic of this golden Renthals bar pad, then flick through this month's mag and find the full pic we've taken it from. Once you've found it simply text the word **DBRRENT** followed by a space, the page number it appears on, another space and then your name and postcode to **81800**. You'll receive a text back confirming your entry to this competition.\*

Entries close on **November 5** with the first correct entry chosen at random getting a pair of Renthals handlebars of their choice...

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## GORDON CROCKARD

### GOOD RIDDANCE!

THE SEASON'S OVER BEFORE IT EVEN GOT GOING FOR GORDY WHOSE HIGHLIGHT OF '09 IS JUST BEING ALIVE...

Words by Gordon Crockard Photo by Suttty

**H**i hi hi! Bloctober already! Damn, how could it all be done and dusted so fast? The 2009 MX season is finished, champions are crowned and the race is over. Man, how unpredictable this world is sometimes. I sure didn't think I was going to have the year I ended up having. It sucked. I think the highlight of my year was to not be dead!

So, what next? Retirement? Redemption? Recesson? Hmmmm? I'd like redemption but can I do it? I don't want retirement but is it time to surrender to reality? Recesson is unavoidable and making earning an income from racing very, very hard. Recesson adds to the favour of retirement from racing but the problem of me not wanting to retire screws that up. Jeez, I don't know what I'm blabbling about. It's simple – making a living from racing is harder now than before. Win races and you get prize money. That's what I thought I was going to do this year but I got hurt at the first race and never got back to the top when I returned. For 2010 I don't know what to do right now.

My other concerning factor is how the modern day MX track is being prepared for racing. Deep ripping of the soil with a rotivator, discing and power-harrowing followed by heavy watering seems to be the trend that the clubs are following to present their dirt on race day. From the research I have done I understand that the clubs reckon this provides better lines or more lines for the riders to race on. They actually think it makes the track better and the racing better. I personally think completely the opposite. If I were to get news that every major British track would be prepared with this current technique then for sure I would forget about racing on them.

I went to Sweden and raced the Duells International Supercross in Gothenburg a few weeks ago. Honda Sweden provided me with a new 2010 CRF450 to use. It had never even had petrol in it when I got it on the day of the race. In total stock trim I enjoyed riding it but would have

preferred some different gearing to help on the tricky parts of the track. I made the Main Event which I was chuffed at and brought the bike home in a steady 12th. Andrew Short won from Michael Byrne from Jacob Marsack, Heath Voss etc etc. I've agreed to go back to Scandinavia at Christmas and in February to do some more supercross. I'm looking forward to it.

I've been able to return back to running again for training. I have always used running as my main form of training. Before I got hurt I was doing 10 miles in one hour. When I started to run again just recently I was way, way off that sort of pace but very pleased to be able to complete a former route from previous runs. I will continue to run and build it all back up.

I let my hair grow pretty long and it pokes out of my helmet all over the place. At a race last week I got roosted and went for a tear-off but instead grabbed onto a big clump of hair that was poking out the side where the tear-off tabs are. It was quite funny as I near tore the head off myself pulling on the hair and not the tear-off as I meant to. So I pulled a hair-off instead! LOL! OMG! PMSL! LMAO! FAF! FBMT! Am I really 30?

Nigel Arnold deserves a thank you for his Pussy Party at Landrake. Fair play, an end-of-season party is the way to go. But I object to having it on the Saturday night as everyone has to race on Sunday so no riders or mechanics get on the sauce. But I did have fun and planned to slash everyone's tyres in the paddock so we would have to stay and party on the Sunday night after the race too. I didn't have the rashness to go through with the tyre slashing plan but maybe next year, eh?

For 2009 I must thank PAR Honda, Geoff Davies for mechanicing, Gavin Boyd and Michael Campbell for paying for stuff, the NHS for fixing me, all my mates, Jim Beam, Jack Daniels, Ron Bacardi, Chris Peacock and Dan Gleballs. So fanks!





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# STEPHEN SWORD

## MOVING UP!

SWORDY SWINGS HIS LEG OVER A FEISTY FO-FIDDY AND WINS AT LANGRISH BUT IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO EARN A PLACE ON THE MXdn TEAM...

Words by **Stephen Sword** Photo by **Sutty**

**W**ith the MX2 British title in the bag it was time for me to get out on the 450 in preparation for the last round at Landrake and maybe even a slot on the des Nations team? Hmmm, we'll come to that one later...

As I didn't go to Brazil I thought I would ride the last Red Bull Pro National at Wakes Colne to get some more race time in on the MX1 machine. The Thursday before I had a big crash while out practising so felt really sore for the race. When those 450s bite they really do bite hard. The day went okay – I had a small coming together with Noble in the first race which resulted in me bending my front disc so I continued but with no front brake. It's surprising how much you need it, I was missing ruts and going over berms on every corner. I ended the day third overall behind Noble and Nunny so not too bad considering I was feeling a bit secondhand.

I trained hard over the next two weeks – with Landrake on my mind I wanted to make sure I was on top form. Steve Dixon rang me that week to tell me I was in his plans for the des Nations team but that he was more than likely going to choose Simpson. I said that he should have given everybody a shot at Landrake for the last slot on the team. He didn't agree!

It was my first time racing at Landrake so the track was new to me but one I really liked. It was a good day and I won the second race and the overall and proved to everyone that I can ride a 450. But still not good enough for a place in the des Nations! Work that one out! I showed that I was faster and more consistent than Simpson in both qualifying and the second race. I'm pissed off but not going to lose any sleep over it. As much as I would have liked to be in the team I wish them all the best and would like to see them on the podium. There has been a lot of negativity leading up to the race so let's put all that to one side and get behind Great Britain.

Landrake was also my last British championship race for the Red Bull KTM UK team as you may have heard that I'm moving over to CCM Racing for 2010. Roger and KTM

have been great to me, a fantastic bunch of people and a real pleasure to ride for. My mechanic Wayne has been awesome this year and has never let me down. Thanks mate – it's been great working with you. He was giving it beans in the mechanics' race at Landrake, grabbed a bit of whisky throttle on the 450 and bit the dirt. That's what I like to see though – he was working flat-out for me all day then went out and gave it 110 per cent. Good on ya! I will miss all the team but I'm also looking forward to the new challenge at CCM and the move to MX1.

My last race with the KTM will be Weston Beach Race. I've not done that race since '99 so hopefully I won't be too ring rusty – I can't wait to get out there and give it a good go. After that it's then my off-season and I'm really looking forward to spending time with the family. Ayrtton is now nearly six months old and is turning into such a cool child. He now eats solids by himself and drinks from a cup. Time has gone so fast, too fast in fact. Jodie has done a great job as it's hard for her as I'm never there at weekends and have slept in the spare room so she's done it all. I'm sure she will make me do a lot now that the off-season is here!

We'll be going on holiday at some point too which is much-needed as we were unable to go last year as Jodie was pregnant and with all the complications she was unable to fly so it will be amazing to chill out for a few weeks on the beach. Hopefully I'll be able to get in a few rounds of golf as well. I played the other week for a charity that was organised by Tom Fuller. It's an annual event in memory of Ian Beattie who sadly passed away a year ago. It was a really good turn-out and I enjoyed the day.

Graeme Irwin has now gone back to Ireland after lodging at Jodie's mum's house. Must say it is loads quieter without him – only joking mate, it's going to be strange not having you around! He's doing the GPs next year and I'm sure he's going to do really well.

Anyway, that's it for this month – once again, good luck to the British team!

Braaaaaaap #7

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# JAMES STEWART

THIS MONTH IT'S CURRENT AMA SUPERCROSS CHAMP JAMES STEWART AT THE MERCY OF A THOROUGH DBR PROBING. READ ON TO FIND OUT IF CHAD REED WILL BE GETTING A CHRISTMAS CARD THIS YEAR OR IF WE'LL EVER SEE BUBBA AT THE GPs...

Interview by JP O'Connell Photo by Chris Tedesco/Red Bull Photofiles

**Q:** I'm sure you've been asked this a million times before but where did the 'Bubba' nickname originate from?

**Mike Jones, Worcester**

**A:** "I honestly don't know, there is no story behind it, people just started calling me Bubba."

**Q:** As you've won pretty much everything there is to win in the US would you ever consider coming over to Europe to ride for a world championship?

**Andy Hopkins, Southampton**

**A:** "Well there are still some things that I want to do here in the US but I wouldn't be opposed to racing in Europe and giving that a shot."

**Q:** Was it hard to watch this year's Nationals from the sidelines or did you enjoy the rest?

**Pete Noble, Bournemouth**

**A:** "At first it was extremely hard because I am a racer and that's what I know but once I started to get busy with my ride days and filming my TV show for Fuel TV I started to enjoy the time off and was content."

**Q:** Everyone knows you've ridden Kawasaki all of your life so why did you decide to go to Yamaha?

**Reece, Corsham**

**A:** "I was ready for a change and a fresh new feel and Yamaha gave me the programme and the backing that I was looking for – Kawasaki never called me either!"

**Q:** Going into Vegas this year how serious did you take Chad Reed's 'I'm gonna put him in row Z' comment and did you change tactics accordingly?

**Martin Hendrick, Winchester**

**A:** "I took it serious because I know what kind of racer he is so I had my guard up and I was ready."

**Q:** Is the animosity between you and Reed 100 per cent or is there a bit of media hype going on?

**Steve Woodley, Chard**

**A:** "Nope, we 100 per cent dislike each other, no smoke and mirrors on that!"

**Q:** Let's say Roger De Coster offered you the deal of a lifetime, would you be able to have Chad as a team-mate?

**Darren McBride, Reigate**

**A:** "Absolutely no way, not even something I would consider!"

**Q:** Do you ever break out your two-stroke for a bit of fun?

**Tim Sutton, Norfolk**

**A:** "Actually I rode one for my first two ride days and had a blast on it. It was a Yamaha 250cc and it was awesome."

**Q:** Whenever you race the expectation is that you will win but everyone has off days so how do you cope with that pressure?

**Jason Dodds, Chalk**

**A:** "It's the bed I made so I just do what I can and try my hardest and hopefully it works out lucky for me – it does most of the time."

**Q:** Of all the awesome battles you've had, which race stands out as the best for you?

**Paul Harrison, Ringwood**

**A:** "Probably Jacksonville SX when me and RC really went at it but I have had some other good ones also."

**Q:** Is there a downside to being the fastest, most recognised motocrosser on the planet?

**Rick Greeney, London**

**A:** "Sure but it's not bad enough where I wish I wasn't, I don't want to air it out."

**Q:** For most people your exclusion from this year's des Nations team, especially with the current injury list, came as quite a shock. What are your views on it?

**Nev, Cambridge**

**A:** "I said all along I will not race it if I don't get to ride at least one outdoor National this year, I have to take my pride out of it and do what is right to my fellow racers who have put the time into racing in the outdoors and deserve the opportunity."

**Q:** What career goals have you set yourself to keep your motivation at the max?

**Bob Thatcher, Exeter**

**A:** "Well I would like to break the SX win record set by Jeremy McGrath and that will take a while so that's a good one that I keep in check."

**Q:** Do you share set-up tips and line choice with your team-mates or are they on their own?

**Kevin Potter, Hedge End**

**A:** "If they ask I will say what I think, a lot of what we do is the rider so what works for me doesn't necessarily mean it will work for others."

**Q:** How big a part has your dad played in your success?

**Jack Feldman, Hants**

**A:** "A huge part, I wouldn't be who or where I am today without his hard work and determination to push me."

**Q:** If you get a day off what do you like to do to chill out?

**Stuart Topp, Plymouth**

**A:** "I bought a new house in Orlando, Florida, on a nice lake so I been into the boat lately."



## NEXT MONTH

GORDON CROCKARD >>>

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# BEST BUDS!

FIGHTING, SPEEDING AND STICKING LAST LAP PASSES IN ON RICKY CARMICHAEL – ALL IN A DAY'S WORK FOR THE FRENCH CONNECTION...

Interview and photo by JP O'Connell

**T**his month it's striped tops, berets and onions on strings as we go Francais and catch up with Bud Racing's flying Frenchmen David Vuillemin and Gaultier Paulin. Hawheehawheehaw!

**DBR:** Who would play you in a film of your life?

**DV:** "Kevin Spacey I think."

**GP:** "I'm not too sure of their name but for sure I would want somebody who was funny and with determination."

**DBR:** When did you last clean an air filter?

**DV:** "In January on one of my practice bikes."

**GP:** "Two months ago, for me it's not a problem if I get to have a good training bike. I always remember where I have come from."

**DBR:** Could you check your own valve clearances?

**DV:** "No, I am a good two-stroke mechanic but not so good on a four-stroke."

**GP:** "Yes I can do that."

**DBR:** Have you ever eaten anything you've killed?

**DV:** "We fished for trout at Mammoth Mountain then grilled them that night, that was pretty cool."

**GP:** "My father and my cousin hunt but not me, I like animals!"

**DBR:** How many bones have you broken?

**DV:** "Oh so many! In 2007 I crashed and broke 11 bones in one go so it's got to be over 20 in total."

**GP:** "Five I think."

**DBR:** Can you eat spaghetti without a spoon?

**DV:** "I'm good, I can do it with or without!"

**GP:** "Ummm, yes, I think so – it's difficult but I can!"

**DBR:** Something you eat that you know you shouldn't?

**DV:** "In France it is popular to dip chocolate cookies into coffee, sometimes I do this for breakfast – when nobody is looking!"

**GP:** "I am very strict with my training and diet so I eat what I have to eat. I know that when I am too old for motocross I will be able to eat whatever I like."

**DBR:** Do you own a pair of slippers?

**DV:** "Yes I do, some nice black ones."

**GP:** "Oh yeah, every time I am in the house."

**DBR:** You're in second and on the leader's rear wheel – do you take him out on the last corner for the win?

**DV:** "In the US supercross in 2007 I had to take someone out in the last corner of the LCQ, I'd had a bad quali and it was for the last transfer into the Main."

**GP:** "It depends, if it is for the world championship then yes."

**DBR:** What is the single biggest highlight of your career so far?

**DV:** "I have pretty much won any race you can think of at some time in my career but for me the highlight was my first 250cc SX win, San Diego 2000. I think it is the most difficult race to win in all of our sport."

**GP:** "The first five GPs this year. Before I was injured so nobody was thinking about me but in my head it was clear and I knew I was going to win and now everyone wants to talk to me."

**DBR:** What car do you drive?

**DV:** "I drive a BMW 320 and a VW Transporter in France and an Audi A6 in the US."

**GP:** "A Dodge Ram SRT-10."

**DBR:** And if money were no object?

**DV:** "Bentley Continental GT!"

**GP:** "A Rolls Royce or a Bentley Continental GT."

**DBR:** Have you ever blamed a poor result on a non-existent mechanical issue?

**DV:** "No, I don't think so – if I stop it's because there is something wrong with the bike."

**GP:** "Never, never! I would never say that, my mechanic he works so hard for me."

**DBR:** Have you ever been arrested?

**DV:** "No. I had to go to the cops to explain my side of the story as regards a little fight I got in but I wasn't arrested."

**GP:** "No but I have been stopped for speeding – many times!"

**DBR:** If you could change anything about yourself what would it be?

**DV:** (Laughing) "My hair!"

**GP:** "Nothing, I am me and I like my life and I like my personality – I would like a world championship though!"

**DBR:** What's the most embarrassing thing you've done while drunk?

**DV:** "I have been drunk only two or three times in my life and I am 31! On one of those times I ended up lying down in the middle of the street!"

**GP:** "I don't drink so have never been drunk – well, not at the moment!"

**DBR:** If you could meet any person, alive or dead, who would it be?

**DV:** "Thom Yorke from Radiohead."

**GP:** "Ayrton Senna."

**DBR:** If you were shipwrecked on an island, what three things would you want with you?

**DV:** "My iPhone, my wife and my kids."

**GP:** "My family, my friends and some nice girls!"

**DBR:** What's your favourite film?

**DV:** "The Usual Suspects."

**GP:** "Sniper."

**DBR:** Where is your favourite place on Earth?

**DV:** "I'm undecided. I like the US but I also like where I'm from, around Marseille. I think it's probably where home happens to be."

**GP:** "For motocross it would be California, otherwise St Tropez."

**DBR:** Do you have any fears or phobias?

**DV:** "A fear of getting old and dying. The thought of getting old and not being able to do exactly what you want to do."

**GP:** "Yes, snakes and big spiders."

**DBR:** What's your most prized possession?

**DV:** "My kids."

**GP:** "My family."

**DBR:** Favourite race you've been in?

**DV:** "When I passed Carmichael on the last lap in the Indianapolis Supercross in 2002."

**GP:** "The first moto in Turkey this year."

**DBR:** Have you ever been in a fight?

**DV:** "Yeah, three times. I get into trouble too much, I don't know why but I seem to be a magnet for trouble."

**GP:** "Before motocross I used to box so if someone came up to me at school..."

**DBR:** Is winning a race better than sex?

**DV:** "Yes, definitely!"

**GP:** "If you win a race then the sex is coming afterwards!"

**DBR:** How do you have your steak?

**DV:** "Rare."

**GP:** "Medium."

**DBR:** Blonde or brunette?

**DV:** "The older I get the more I like brunette."

**GP:** "I like blonde and brunette, tall with long legs."

**DBR:** Something about yourself that nobody else knows?

**DV:** "I play poker too much. You win some you lose some – it's a rollercoaster!"

**GP:** "I was world BMX champ in 2000 and I am always happy!"



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# TO THE WIRE!

BIRD AND EDMONDS SEAL ULSTER AND IRISH CROWNS IN THE LAST MOTOS OF THE SEASON...

Words by **Stevie Mills** Photo by Suttly

It seems like only yesterday that GC sustained serious injuries at Hawkstone Park and with the news of another Ulsterman spending a couple of days in a High Dependency Unit it's another stark reminder of the dangers involved in racing at a professional level.

One of the most respected racers in Ireland, Wayne Garrett ran into a fallen rider's machine and was then hit by someone else. Punctured lungs and broken ribs are at the forefront of a comprehensive trauma report by his doctor but thanks to Wayne's fitness level he was able to withstand such an impact. Get well soon mate...

British ladies' champion has a certain ring to it and Natalie Kane added another title to her ever expanding trophy cabinet, taking the final round in commanding style and winning the first moto by 26 seconds. All things considered, Natalie must be a realistic contender for the women's world crown next year.

Landrake was the venue for the finale of the Maxxis British series and the local lads in MX2 had plenty to fight for. Martin Barr had an outside chance of nailing third in the series but that pretty much depended on Jake Nicholls having his worst day yet. As it happened Jake picked himself of the ground, battled with the tough midfield warriors and secured a one-two in the final points standings for the hard-working Red Bull KTM UK team.

Ninth overall in his first full year is a solid performance but I know Graeme Irwin will not be happy dropping a couple of places in the final meeting of the season. A full year of GP racing in 2010 will help Graeme develop his skills and the popular, ever-smiling youngster is looking forward to the new challenge.

The final rounds of the Irish and Ulster MX season provided enough raw emotion and adrenalin to rival the entire series of Rocky films. For the Ulster MX2 finale at Donnamana, series leader Stuart Edmonds was carrying an arm injury after a monumental crash during a practice session. Only two points behind Edmonds, Ricky Bird was also on the hurt list and was unable to walk or even sit just two days before race day. But the young Watt KTM/GOMX racer was determined to at least try to make it to the startgate.

Richard scored a gutsy fifth in the first moto, despite only running two laps of practice to save his already battered body for the racing. And Lady Luck was not smiling on Edmonds when the red flag came out at the 11-minute mark due to an injured rider on the track – Edmonds had crashed on lap four and could only manage 16th due to the shortened race distance.

At the front victory went to Wayne Garrett on his TSR KTM, a mere half-a-second from Edward Allingham. It was clear to see that Ed has adapted to the American style of riding and has blistering pace – he just needs to figure out how to ride at that pace without crashing and we may well have another Irish rider worth watching on the international stage.

Race two was another battle between the young guns with Jason Garrett putting on a masterful display of riding to take victory from Allingham with Wayne third. Bird knew if he could take a top 10 the championship was his and he tailed Edmonds home for sixth across the finish. Edmonds was graceful in defeat, being one of the first to congratulate the new

*Martin Barr misses out on third in the Maxxis MX2 division*



Ulster MX2 champion.

One day later and the motocross circus moved south to Dundalk Moto Park where the sunshine brought out the biggest crowd at a domestic championship meeting all season. The maths would allow Edmonds to collect the MX1 crown by taking a pair of third place finishes even if Garrett won both motos which was looking likely as the TSR racer blitzed qualification.

Garrett grabbed the holeshot, checked out and cruised to the win by 10 seconds from Gary Gibson while Edmonds was sticking to the pace notes. But halfway into the final moto his gameplan went a little off course as Ashley Greedy, who was riding to his own script, simply rode the wheels off the Body Tec RMZ450.

Garrett set about chasing Greedy while Edmonds tailed the TSR pilot and everything was as it should be until Edmonds crashed heavily in a rhythm section. Handlebars twisted and looking distinctly uncomfortable, Edmonds rejoined the fray in seventh position with his championship in jeopardy!

Sniffing victory, Garrett caught and passed

Greedy – only to be passed again two laps from home – while Edmonds mustered together one final push and the entire championship was played out on the final lap of the season. Garrett could not find a way past Greedy and Edmonds battled his way through to fourth at the flag and the Irish MX1 crown!

No sooner had Edmonds crossed the line to a hero's welcome he was receiving medical attention for broken bones in his wrist. Fortunes changed in a second and that evening GC received a call from Stephen Russell so the Crock Star is confirmed for the Irish MXdN team.

It's the time of the year again when suggestions for the 2010 Ulster championship race format will appear on [ulstermotocross.com](http://ulstermotocross.com), the exchanges and rants will get heated and Mal will remind us that we should all vote with our feet and go lobby our club delegates in the appropriate manner. It's the way democracy works, isn't it?

Simply put – there are way too many championship race days. But I reckon that's a topic for another day...

*Stevie*  
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# VIVA LA FRANCE!

THE FINNS ARE ALMOST FINISHED AND NOW IT'S THE TURN OF THE FRENCH TO DOMINATE THE WORLD ENDURO SCENE...

Words and photo by Jonty Edmunds

It wasn't all that long ago that Finland were the undisputed powerhouse of world enduro. With more world champions among their International Six Days Enduro team in a single year than most nations have ever produced they ran roughshod over pretty much everyone. They were acknowledged as the kings of enduro with an ISDE 'dream team'.

And they still are to a certain extent but with one notable difference – their once seemingly never-ending talent pool is finally starting to dry up. Where once unheard of Finns would arrive onto the world championship scene and instantly make headlines, during '09 no new Finnish riders joined the WEC. Finland's national enduro dominance is all but over.

Finnish riders still feature predominantly within all of the WEC's top teams but not in the way they did a few years ago. While BMW's rider line-up is exclusively Finnish there is now just one Finn within the ranks of the factory KTM team, one at Honda, one at Husqvarna and one at Husaberg. They're still without question some of the very best enduro riders in the world, it's just that there are fewer and fewer of them today with no youngsters coming up through the ranks.

France are the new Finland. For many years a nation of extremely talented enduro riders, it's only in the past two or three years that they've really started to assert themselves as the best of the best. Topping last year's ISDE in Greece, the Frenchies showed that as a nation they're now where it's at as far as depth of talent is concerned.

It wouldn't surprise me if France dominate the international enduro scene for the next 10 years or so, much like Finland have done for the last 10. I'd say that barring any mechanical problems or freak accidents they'll win this year's ISDE in Portugal without too much trouble. And if the final round of this year's World Enduro Championship is anything to go by they'll soon become the 'must have' riders for all WEC teams.

Truth is French riders are now the top dogs within several WEC teams – namely KTM, Husqvarna, TM and Gas Gas. While traditionally French riders have long been hard to beat within France they didn't always travel that well (with obvious exceptions such as Stephane Peterhansel). Outside of France, in conditions that weren't quite to their liking, they were nowhere near as dominant.

All that has changed during the last few years, due largely to the number of French motocross riders giving enduro a go. Johnny Aubert and Antoine Meo have rocketed to the top of the enduro game in no uncertain terms, as has Christophe Nambotin. But it's not just the senior WEC classes in which French riders are doing well. The Enduro Junior class is stacked with French riders with both Gas Gas and Husaberg backing Gallic youngsters in 2010.

Trying to put a finger on exactly why France have risen to the top of the international enduro scene in recent years isn't all that difficult to understand. Not if you've been to a French world round recently. The level of support for enduro in France – central France in particular – is staggering. Seemingly everyone from the town mayor to the man on the street enjoys and welcomes enduro into their local community.



**Rodrig Thain is just one of a crop of French ex-MXers who now race enduros for a living**

That added to the fact that in France motocross riders – even top level motocross racers – are not only prepared to try enduro but enjoy trying enduro means that France are never short of fresh talent.

Then there's the French junior army team. Helping to mould talented youngsters into potential WEC winners, the Husqvarna-backed squad gets it right year on year. The WEC promoter is French, which has to help a little. And, despite the economic slowdown, enduro in France is thriving.

France have something very good going at the moment. As long as enduro sport has been in existence riders from different nations have dominated at different times and now it's

France's time. Riders from the former Czechoslovakia were all but impossible to beat once. As were riders from Sweden. Today the Czech Republic and Sweden hardly feature on the international enduro map at all while France dominate it.

France won't remain at the top of the enduro world forever. But for now it looks as if they're going to be hard to remove. With a solid mix of experienced top-flight WEC racers backed up by numerous talented youngsters France will stay at the top for a good few years to come.

As far as the ISDE is concerned, well, it's going to take a super-human effort for even the once-feared Finnish team to beat them in Portugal next week.



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S: 28-40  
Quartz Glove  
REF: 3202BK  
S: S-XL

(B) BLUE

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Pant  
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S: 28-40  
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(D) SPIKE STRIP GREEN

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S: S-XL

(E) SPIKE STRIP BLUE

Jersey  
REF: 2202KB  
S: S-XXL  
Pant  
REF: 1202KB  
S: 28-40  
Quartz Glove  
REF: 3202BK  
S: S-XL

(F) PEG LEG

Jersey  
REF: 2202PG  
S: S-XXL  
Pant  
REF: 1202PG  
S: 28-38  
Quartz Glove  
REF: 3202BK  
S: S-XL

(G) SKULIOSIS

Jersey  
REF: 2202RS  
S: S-XXL  
Pant  
REF: 1202RS  
S: 28-38  
Quartz Glove  
REF: 3202RS  
S: S-XXL

(H) GREED

Jersey  
REF: 2202NE  
S: S-XXL  
Pant  
REF: 1202NE  
S: 28-38  
Quartz Glove  
REF: 3202NE  
S: S-XL

20 ROGUE TO SERIES



(A) FIRE

Jersey  
REF: 2201FI  
S: S-XXL  
Pant  
REF: 1201FI  
S: 28-38  
Glove  
REF: 3201FI  
S: S-XXL

(B) RAPTOR

Jersey  
REF: 2200CN  
S: S-XXL  
Pant  
REF: 1201CN  
S: 28-38  
Glove  
REF: 3201CN  
S: S-XL

(C) RED

Jersey  
REF: 2201RD  
S: S-XXL  
Pant  
REF: 1201RD  
S: 28-38  
Glove  
REF: 3201RD  
S: S-XL

(D) BLUE SLASH

Jersey  
REF: 2201BL  
S: S-XXL  
Pant  
REF: 1201BL  
S: 28-38  
Glove  
REF: 3201BL  
S: S-XL

(E) BLACK SLASH

Jersey  
REF: 2201BK  
S: S-XXL  
Pant  
REF: 1201BK  
S: 28-38  
Glove  
REF: 3201BK  
S: S-XXL

(F) OLMEC BLUE

Jersey  
REF: 2201OB  
S: S-XXL  
Pant  
REF: 1201OB  
S: 28-38  
Glove  
REF: 3201OG  
S: S-XL

(G) OLMEC GREY

Jersey  
REF: 2201OG  
S: S-XXL  
Pant  
REF: 1201OG  
S: 28-38  
Glove  
REF: 3201OG  
S: S-XL



## **BAD BREAK!**

I'm sitting here with a freshly busted ankle which was broken on my minibike of all things in between sessions on the MX bike at my local track (Green Valley MX). The bad thing is that I didn't even fall off! It was done with a big dab and the minibike hitting me in the ankle coming out the berm. Bummer!

But the worst thing is I'd only just booked the flights to the MX des Nations. I'll have to give that one a miss then. And almost as depressing is that I'd almost finished a season of downhill racing (all bar one more national in Rheola, South Wales). And that I've just become owner of a new KXF250 four weeks ago which was going to have a rinsing every weekend over the winter. Or maybe even raced if there was anything on. Gutter!

Well I hope you can see it in your hearts to fit me up with those fine set of Etnies for my return to the world of two socks and two trainers. My toes are freezing! Ah well, back to the PS3 and MX vs ATV.

**Leon, South Wales**

PS In reply to the letter in the September mag. In downhill mountainbike racing they pay their marshals up to 25 bucks an event – this would defo get you all the marshals you need. They also get the burger van to supply their food and water for the day. Incorporating this cost into the entry fee is the way they tackle this and people will pay as it gives them less hassle. If it works for DH it will work for MX.

*Poor you Leon, we can almost hear the violin music echoing through the valleys! It's a tough life, eh? And what's stopping you going to Italy on crutches? But we're not so cold-hearted here at DBR that we don't feel your pain as well so there's a brand-spanking new pair of Etnies finest footwear on their way to you!*

## **WTF?**

Can someone please tell me what the hell is going on with the ACU and the British MXdN team because I haven't got a clue!

First they let Youthstream walk all over them and fire Mark Eastwood because he's got the balls to speak his mind, then they choose Shaun Simpson over Stephen Sword for the final place on the team even though Sword won fair and square at the last round of the British championship.

I know that the injuries to Anderson and Nunn can't be helped – and running with the team that nearly finished second last year isn't a bad thing as long as Billy MacKenzie is fully fit, fired up and can keep things rubber-side down – but the way the whole thing has been handled is unfair on both Mark, Stephen and all their supporters.

**Stephen, Tonbridge**

*Hmmmm, a little bit of controversy there Stephen! We agree that the ACU should have stood by Easty – okay, he should have thought before he opened his mouth but we do still have freedom of speech in this country, don't we? The Swordy versus Simpson debate is more complicated – if Shaun hadn't got knocked down by Billy in race two would he have beaten Stephen? If Rocky Marciano had fought Mike Tyson would he have remained unbeaten? You get our point – the main thing is we're going to Italy with a strong team...*

## **MEGA MAXXIS!**

I just had to write in to say what an awesome Sunday I've just spent watching the Maxxis MX championship round at Landrake. Great racing, a great atmosphere and – best of all – just up the road from me! It doesn't get much better!

I like to get out and about and went to the earlier rounds at Langrish and Foxhill and could feel the excitement building knowing the series was going to come to a head at my home track so I was gutted when Swordy and Brad went and won their titles at Duns because I really wanted to see the championships decided down here.

But on the day it didn't really matter because the second MX2 race was the most exciting moto I've ever seen in my life! Jake Nicholls rode the wheels off his KTM to make sure of second place in the championship. Even though the commentator didn't know if the passes he made on the last lap were enough we'd worked out the points and knew what he needed to do.

After Sunday we're all even bigger Jake Nicholls fans and will be willing him on next season!

**Rich, Plymouth**

*Couldn't agree with you more Rich – about the racing, the weather, the atmosphere and the balls-out display from Jake. It was everything that's great about British MX...*



## **AMERICAN IDIOT?**

Johnny O'Hannah here, I LOVE your magazine! I noticed it's bigger than the US magazines – are we over-compensating for something? The photography is brilliant – great job Sarah Gutierrez and Toby Fuller (don't tell Simon Cudby I said that)!

Anyway, I just thought I would drop you a line for no apparent reason. I risked sniperfire for this picture I'm sending you. I'm on a rooftop in Iraq wearing Oakley goggles, glasses, gloves and even the old-school patch!

Since I made it out alive I've been travelling the world like a rock star, writing a few articles for Racer X magazine, doing a MotoVerte interview, hitting the MX/SX races, signing autographs, getting lowered from the ceiling in Paris at the Bercy SX – ya know, same ole s\*\*t.

Good Luck at the MX of Nations!

**Johnny O'Hannah**, the Uncle of American Motocross, via email

*I say! A letter from a colonial! One believes the correct response is something along the lines of 'thanks for the props, dude'. Is one correct?*

## **HATE MAIL #1**

As a life-long resident of Suffolk I'm writing in to say how disgusted I am with the way your so-called editor has described Ipswich as the 'back end of beyond' in the latest issue. I'll never buy your magazine again!

**Disgusted of Ipswich**, via email

## **HATE MAIL #2**

As a life-long resident of Lancashire I'm writing in to say how disgusted I am with the way your so-called editor has described Morecambe as the 'arse end of nowhere' in the latest issue. I'll never buy your magazine again!

**Disgusted of Morecambe**, via email



## **GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?** WELL HERE'S WHERE YOU SHOULD BE SAYING IT...

Write to Rant at the usual address or

email us at [rant@dirtbikerider.co.uk](mailto:rant@dirtbikerider.co.uk)

All letters/emails must be accompanied by a full address.

Oh and please don't send emails all in capitals. Cheers!

## **LETTERS WIN PRIZES**

Write to Rant, get your letter published and you'll win a one-litre trigger bottle of marvellous bike cleaning fluid Muc-Off. And if we rate your letter highly enough you'll also receive our star prize – this month a pair of **Etnies Digit shoes**.





## BOYESEN QUICKSTART

Fresh on the market for fans of four-strokes is this Boyesen QuickStart System which now has an adjustable leak jet and hot start assist! A serious step towards achieving EFI levels of performance, this third generation QuickStart combines amazing innovations that solve hot engine starting problems, provides an adjustable leak jet circuit for on-the-fly tweaks and eliminates bogging from trapped air in the system. In short the QuickStart is the most effective way to add performance to your Keihin FCR carburettor MX machine.

**Price:** £129.99  
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**Contact:** 08707 779201



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Tell your partner, brother, mother or any other sucker just how much their riding sucks with this state of the art mechanic to rider communication system from GSP engineering. Using the latest in chalkboard technology this 8mm thick pitboard is not only light it's resilient too which means it's as strong and potentially damaging as the language used on it.

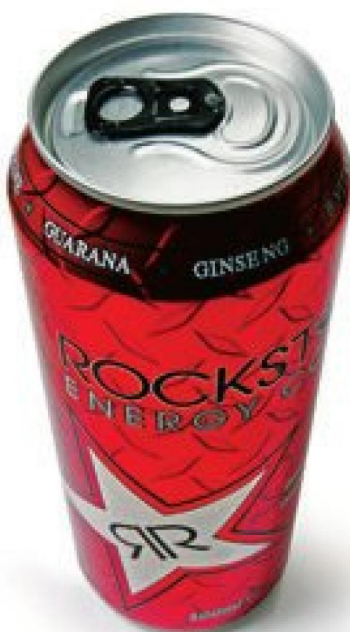
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**Contact:** 01257 544504



## MUC-OFF CHAIN DOC

Muc-Off's Chain Doc kit is claimed to be the ultimate clean n' lube chain device and who are we to argue as it does the job very nicely with minimal mess and fuss! Simply place the jaws of the Chain Doc over the chain and close it using the trigger. Then spray the Muc-Off Chain Cleaner while turning the rear wheel of your dirt scooter with the other. In no time at all you'll have a nice clean chain that's ready to lube right up! The kit also comes with a spare set of scrapers and a free Muc-Off Dry PTFE Racing Chain Lube sample too – woot woot!

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## ROCKSTAR ENERGY COLA

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**Contact:** 01204 664295



## THOR RACING PHASE RACEWEAR

THOR's Phase range of race kit has always offered the off-road racer good value for money and for 2010 it's now even better. With upgraded fabrics used throughout and the same legendary fit and durability as always this sub-£150 set of gloves, jersey and pants is in stores now.

**Price:** Pants £79.99 Jersey £29.99  
Gloves £24.99  
**Supplier:** madison.co.uk  
**Contact:** 0870 034 7226





## ANDERSON M5 CROSS RC MOTOCROSS BIKE

With minibikes being so last season could it be that radio-controlled motocross madness will be the new in-thing with pit poseurs? With awesome new machines like the ARX540 and this Anderson M5 now available on the market it's not unfeasible that RC MX could become *waaaay* more popular. We've already tested one of these Anderson M5 bad boys and although we're no experts it seemed pretty easy to control and a whole heap of fun to operate.

**Price:** £249.99  
**Supplier:** racing-cars.com  
**Contact:** 01604 790770

## ANSWER

### JAMES STEWART CYK RACEWEAR

While this kit might not help turn you into a bona fide supercross star it sure will help you look like one as it's the exact same racewear – bar the helmet – that James Stewart wore on his way to the 2009 AMA SX title. Designed to perform and built to last this '10 CYK kit is just the thing to turn some heads at your local raceway.

**Price:** Pants £135.99 Jersey £39.99 Gloves £24.99 Helmet £79.50  
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Made in the hilariously named town of Wangara – that's in Australia, mate – Shotz is the latest range of energy enhancing products to hit UK shores. With electrolyte tablets, energy bars and gel sachets all ready to give you that extra physical edge the Shotz range might be just the thing to help take your racing to the next level. Check 'em out at [www.shotz1.com](http://www.shotz1.com)

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**Contact:** 01978 664743



## FOX RACING VORTEX RACEWEAR

Fox Racing's 360 range gets an update for 2010 and in our opinion looks even more striking than ever with this rather stunning vortex design. As worn by AMA National MX champ Ryan Dungey and our very own stunt midget Tony Marshall this awesomely designed, marvellously manufactured, well fitting and tough-as-old-boots race kit performs as well as it looks and is a well-worthy addition to any serious racer's kit bag.

**Price:** V3 Helmet £225 Jersey £37 Glove £28 Pants £130  
**Supplier:** foxeurope.com  
**Contact:** 0191 487 6100







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## THE REVVIN' REVEREND!

Some odd things we know about Jake Nicholls...

- 1: He's nicknamed 'The Reverend' because he's got a proper church in his garden
- 2: He looks a bit like High School Musical heart-throb Zac Efron
- 3: He has six toes on his left foot
- 4: He wants to win more than anyone else
- 5: He's featured in December's DBR





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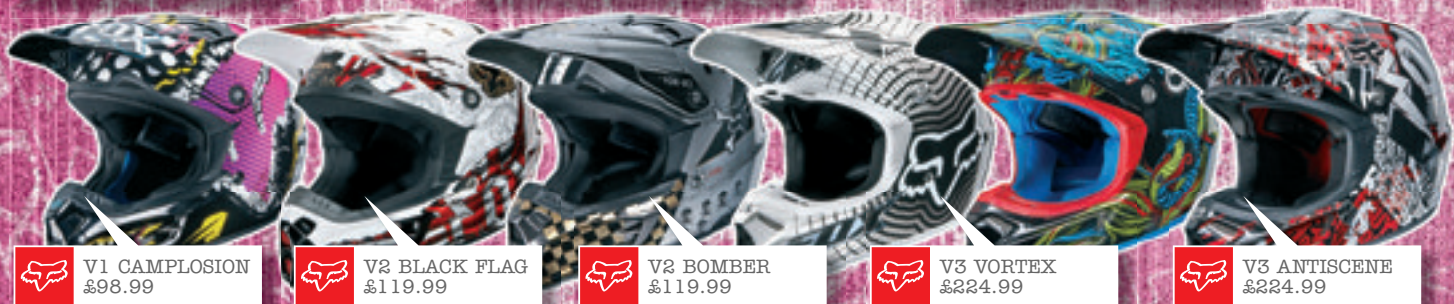
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Words by **Jeff Perrett**



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**Jeffro puts the new YZF450F – “the best production bike I’ve ever ridden” – through its paces at Budds Creek**



**T**

here's been a lot of hype surrounding the 2010 Yamaha YZF450. Is it justified? You can bet your left tezzie it is!

I don't really know where or how to start this test. I suppose I could start with

superlatives and get plenty of them out of the way now – a barrage of the buggers. Awesome! Sublime! Stunning! Brilliant! Magnificent! Mega! Exceptional! I could go on with this for some time but I think you get the idea. So let me spell it out in another way. This is the best production motorcycle I've ever ridden. Ever!

It has to go down as the most innovative too – it's bristling like a bear's arse with exciting new ideas. Ideas that actually work and make a

considerable difference, not just padded-out sales gimmicks like many things in our ever-expanding commercial world. The changes to this bike are best described as radical – there are hardly any parts that are the same as this year's model and by god don't you know it when you ride the thing.

I've been through all the science and technology (well most of it anyway) elsewhere in this article but how does that all stack up on the track? You should already have an idea from my opening paragraph but let me try and put that into a little more perspective and finer detail.

To highlight how well Yamaha have done in centralising the mass and improving the handling I think this best sums it up – the bike is heavier than this year's model but feels stupidly light and nimble compared with the 2009 machine! Magic?

It's like you're riding a large BMX bike with the smoothest, sharpest, almost automatic engine

you can imagine. Ken De Dycker will have a field day on this thing and as for what James Stewart will be able to do on it boggles the mind. But the same goes for you too. The design objective was to build a bike that will make you a better and faster rider regardless of your skill level and they've achieved that – hands down.

It's so easy to put this bike where you want it and the power delivery is sublime. This doesn't feel like a 450 at all, just a fast 250F – a very, very fast one. The response is razor sharp to the point that it actually just feels like an extension of you such is the time between thinking about twisting the throttle and it actually working – incredible.

I turned some laps using the clutch out of turns and then some laps without using the clutch at all. The result? I was faster without it and that speaks volumes for this bike's capability to make you a better rider. It has a >>



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# TECHNICAL TREATS

## HOW YAMAHA REDESIGNED THE MOTOCROSS BIKE...

Before you even swing your leg over it, it's impossible not to notice this bike is like no other on the market. It looks like a prop from *Back to the Future – Part 2*. The cut of the graphics are striking enough but when you take a gawp at the motor and chassis something doesn't quite look right, yet after riding it you know it definitely is right.

The reason it all looks so radical is because the cylinder doesn't slant forward like on most motocross bikes and there appears to be a big hole where the airbox should be. Where's the carb gone too? And for that matter, where the bloody hell is the exhaust pipe? The only part of it you can really see is the silencer coming out of the back – weird.

The styling and look of the bike is something that either floats your boat the moment you see it or it grows on you. I'm with the latter. The more I look at it the better it becomes, kind of like the girl down the pub with a face like a welder's bench who gets more beautiful as the pints slip down. Only this one's still going to be a looker in the morning! I guess if I had to be picky (which I guess is the point of testing a bike and giving an opinion on it) I don't really like the sidepanels.

The new radiator shrouds and tank look bulky and feel wide when you sit on the bike but it's like a Derren Brown mind trick. Mainly because what you think is mostly the fuel tank is actually the airbox! The shrouds are wide because they have a scoop-like funnel along the top that drives air straight into the airbox, which of course helps performance immensely and avoids all the dust and crap that the rear wheel kicks up and throws at a traditionally placed airbox. Very clever thinking indeed. So what you see with your mind's eye is for the best part just covering thin air and weighs next to nothing.

But hold on, the fuel cap is still on the top isn't it? Yeah it is but the fuel then goes down lower under the front portion of the seat and that is one of the main design features that make this bike perform out on the track. The capacity is now six litres not seven but with the motor being more efficient, according to Yamaha it makes little difference. Another nice touch is the fuel tank is slightly transparent so you can see how much fuel you have in there.

Common sense often prevails although more often than not it's never easily achieved. But Yamaha have managed it. Take the weight of the fuel that sloshes around in front of the rider, lower it and put it under the rider and it's going to make a huge difference to the handling of the bike – it's a no-brainer really. Think of it this way – go running with both arms out in front holding a weight, then take that same weight and strap it to your midriff.

Yamaha have accommodated the fuel tank position by actually lowering the height of the cylinder as well as moving it 12.7 degrees further back. It now sits 8.2 degrees back from vertical as opposed to this year's model that sits 4.5 degrees forward. The cylinderhead is 15mm shorter and cleverly the cylinder sits down in the crankcases rather than on top of them. While they were at it Yamaha also took the opportunity to change the bore and stroke and also the piston which has a compression ratio increased from 12.3:1 to 12.5:1.

The pin off-set is reduced by 1mm and the rings reshaped to reduce friction by around 40 per cent, all designed to offer up more low to mid-range power. The bore is now 2mm bigger at 97mm and the stroke is reduced from 63.4 to 60.8 and the valve cover height is reduced too. The four-valve cylinderhead is completely different to accommodate the front air intake and now rear-facing exhaust port and sync with the new fuel injection. The conrod is also slightly shorter by .5mm but it's the positioning of it that's more significant.



### bike test

***It weighs more than the '09 model but clever centralisation of mass makes it feel lighter***



completely different sound and such useable torque. It's deceptively fast, more so than any other bike I've ridden and because of that you just ooze confidence in no time at all. I could hop, skip, pre-load over most of the bumps I decided to tackle that way. At one point I'd actually convinced myself that I could bunny-hop the thing!

The wide radiator shrouds aren't even a thought in your head when you start riding it. All this stems from the weight feeling like it's between your ankles and you're not throwing any weight above your hips from side to side, I found standing up through turns much easier because of it but if I did decide to push into the seat and be more aggressive the riding positioning and handling allowed me to do so. I had to push it past my safety zone to try and make it slide, wash out or lose traction.

Obviously, the suspension has been re-jigged and the swingarm firmed up to tackle braking bumps and the little sharp edge blighters you find through turns but it's hard to say if that's a complete success. Not because it doesn't do that but because it does it so well. With a combination of the new chassis and engine placement it could be that's what's really making the difference and giving this bike its stability and traction. I'd like to try the new suspension on this year's model just to see how much better it actually is.

It's plush (there's hardly any bikes

these days that aren't) but more importantly it's well-balanced, not only in movement but in rebound and compression. With the stock settings I pushed the thing into take-offs as aggressively as my fat, outta shape ass would allow around Budds Creek and other than speeding up the compression a little for a first ride it was close to the mark of how I like my bike set up. I currently weigh just over 13 stone (and growing!) soaking wet – I'm not sure what the average male weight is but I can't be too far off it. Bottom line, in my first day on a new bike I felt like where I'd be after four to five proper test sessions so the starting point to get better results is a huge improvement.

They haven't neglected the other components and controls either. It starts relatively easily – not first time, every time but more often on the second or third kick – whether it's hot or cold. The clutch is wonderfully light but almost redundant as you only really need it for the start, to pull in or to rev it up for a good old spode-up in a pathetic attempt to impress a female marshal.

There's now an oil sight glass instead of a dipstick which although nothing innovative is a nice touch. The gearbox is smooth, I never missed a gear or even got close to doing so all day and I found it very easy to select neutral when I wanted to. The cylinderhead cover is magnesium along with the clutch cover that has raised ribs so they'll

>>



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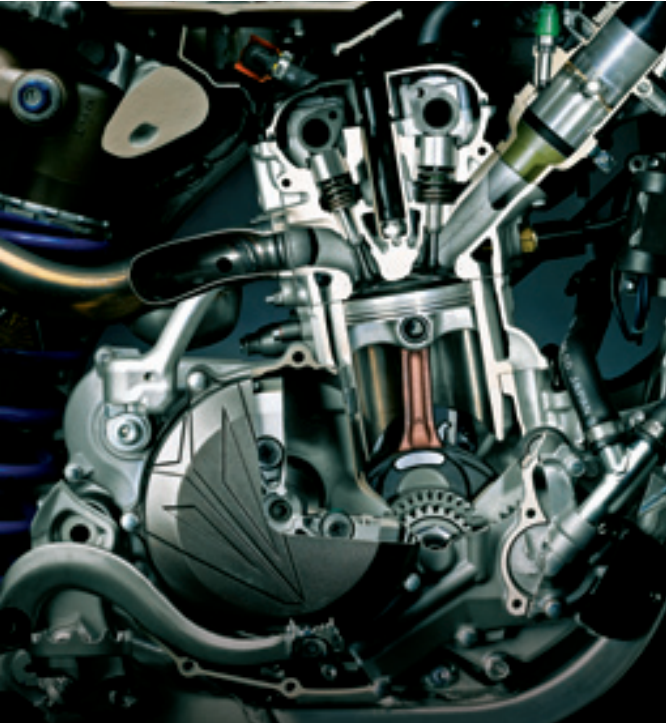
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The cylinder is off-set to the front of the crankshaft centre by 12mm so the conrod is therefore more vertical. So what difference does that make? Well, quite a bit because it means reduced piston friction, more efficient use of combustion and therefore more response between the throttle and the rear wheel. The intake and exhaust crankshaft profiles are different and the actual valve springs are now oval and not round to increase valve working angles and lift.

The exhaust is ridiculously funky! Like a pig's tail it's all coiled up under the seat which I think is brilliant – it's almost impossible to damage and your nice shiny new boots will never get burned again. And, of course, it's more central in the bike for a lower centre of gravity. There's a resonator on the header pipe that scavenges the gases straight from the cylinder assisting the motor with its low/ mid-range torque. All said and done the engine changes not only make it a more compact power plant but a more controllable one.

I don't know whether Yamaha consciously waited to introduce fuel injection knowing they had this bike up their sleeve but either way they've joined the party with the other Japanese manufacturers. Only Yamaha have burst through the door with a stunner on each like arm, already half cut and having a good time – in other words, they've got the whole concept right!

It's a tuneable, battery-less Keihin system that has a 44mm throttle body and 12-hole injector with a lightweight fuel pump that sits in the fuel tank. Now this is where it's easy to get really lost and I could write two pages on this alone but I don't own an anorak. It really is technical. All you need to know is a throttle position sensor and sensors for the intake pressure, intake air temperature, atmospheric air pressure, crankshaft rpm and coolant temperature constantly monitor how the engine is running and make adjustments accordingly. I don't know how, all I know is that it definitely works.

Of course it's at the front now the exhaust port is at the rear and it's tucked away neatly under the airbox. The coolest thing is the accessory power tuner. It's palm size and easy to use so there's no need to take your laptop to the race, this little gizmo can sit in your tool box – sadly though it comes at an extra cost. Intake fuel amount can be adjusted +/- 21 per cent from standard at nine throttle position points and the ignition +4/-9 degrees, more than enough for anyone to get the setting that suits their style.

To house this new powerplant Yamaha had to completely redesign the chassis. If you think there was a risk of taking a step backwards in handling or it doesn't complement the motor think again! The new 'double S' beam frame is a beautiful bilateral design consisting of 16 components of forged, cast and extruded aluminium. The bods at Yamaha say it gives the flex of a steel frame where needed and the rigidity of a box aluminium frame elsewhere. A fairly bold statement but one they can back up. The radiators are 17mm lower and slanted five degrees forward on the frame now there's no exhaust in the way – again centralising mass – and the handlebar position is back 4mm and down 8mm on this year's model which with the flat seat and weight displacement allows the rider to get further over the front through corners.

With no airbox in the way the new KYB rear shock is plumb centre in the frame with a new piggy back reservoir and a 50mm piston instead of 46mm. There's an improvement in low-speed damping which only helps to make this bike stick to the ground even more. I think the term I'm looking for here is like 's\*\*\*t to a blanket!' The KYB forks now have a stroke of 310mm (an increase of 10mm), the low-speed damping has been adjusted to work in unison with the rear and there's a new oil seal and treatment to the rod. The triple clamps have a new off-set going from 25 to 22mm which along with all the other changes means we now have a YZF450 that really does turn when you want it to – result!

wear and it won't look like you started to clean it with a wire brush and got bored halfway through. The majority of the plastic area where your boots are likely to rub has a textured surface so they also don't scratch up as much (applying aftermarket stickers will be a bugger though). The brakes are about the only thing unchanged and to be fair they're bordering on obsolete because you can throw this bike into a turn at speed and it just tends to stick. It's just a phenomenal piece of engineering really.

Think Neil Armstrong's famous moon landing speech here. This isn't just a step forward for Yamaha, it's a giant leap for motocross. I'd love to give it a perfect 10 but until they put an electric start on it, heated grips and an iPod holder it can only score nine. This definitely has raised the bar but as with most things in life, good things come at a cost.

I personally see two of them. One is the £7,000 plus price tag, the other is a little more deep and philosophical.

This bike is so good it may just have taken a little bit of fun out of what riding a motocross bike is all about. I never once got a little buck wild or dangerous. Don't get me wrong, I don't want a manic, drug-fuelled mistress (at least not just yet) but I don't want the mumsy that's keen for the missionary position once in a blue moon either!

One thing is for sure though, Yamaha have nailed their mission statement. As with their original 'new era' 400cc YZF four-stroke that burst onto the scene 11 years ago and when they were the first to unleash the monoshock on the mass market in 1981, Yamaha have once again been pioneering. This time though 'backwards' thinking really has accelerated them forward.



## YZF450F

### SPECIFICATIONS>>>

**Capacity:** 449.7cc  
**Bore and stroke:** 97mm x 60.8mm  
**Transmission:** Five-speed  
**Fuel capacity:** Six-litres  
**Front suspension:** Kayaba (310mm travel)  
**Rear suspension:** Kayaba (312mm travel)  
**Wheelbase:** 1487mm  
**Ground Clearance:** 383mm  
**Seat height:** 999mm  
**Kerb weight:** 111.9kg



*The radical design means getting your weight over the front in corners is child's play*



*The focus is clear on Tony's face prior to the start of the first GP race of the season in Faenza*







# O U T O F THE BLUE!

AFTER WINNING THREE WORLD TITLES IN FIVE YEARS FOR YAMAHA – INCLUDING THE '09 MX1 CROWN IN A SENSATIONAL DEBUT SEASON ON A 450F – TONY CAIROLI FOUND HIMSELF A SHOCK CASUALTY OF THE GLOBAL RECESSION WHEN HIS DE CARLI TEAM LOST ITS FACTORY SUPPORT. FOR 2010 THE 23-YEAR-OLD SICILIAN WILL FACE POSSIBLY HIS BIGGEST CHALLENGE SO FAR WHEN HE BIDS TO DEFEND HIS CHAMPIONSHIP ON A KTM...

Words by Adam Wheeler Photos by rayarcher.com

**T**he MX1 world champion is sitting a little uncomfortably. But what's a bit of pain given his record-breaking maiden season in the premier category of the FIM motocross world championship – a campaign that's seen him become the youngest winner to date at 23 years of age and become the first individual to own MX2 and MX1 titles? And his 2009 title also means he's equalled Chicco Chiodi's record of three crowns to confirm his status as Italy's finest and most successful motocrosser.

The reason for the Sicilian's awkward posture is down to the ache and the stitches that still remain in his left knee, both results of surgery immediately after sealing his crown at Lierop at the Grand Prix of the Netherlands.

We're in Brazil and a triumphant 2009 is about to end. I've known Tony Cairoli (he prefers it to Antonio) since 2004. He actually attempted a full MX2 GP season in 2003 as an undernourished teenager riding a Honda for the Martin squad. In that difficult debut term Cairoli was fluid on the motorcycle and full of impetuous youth but was spotted more frequently on his pit-bike around the paddock, just another young talent hoping to make his mark at the highest level. Enamoured by supercross and his hero Jeremy McGrath, Cairoli cut a lonely figure having moved from his hometown of Patti to set up with Martin in northern Italy. It was a time in which his accent was made fun of and his ability and potential envied as he laid waste to the mini classes.

But it wasn't until 2004 when an alliance with Claudio De Carli and Yamaha started to bring the latent speed of the rider to the world's attention.

All of a sudden we were forced to digest the capabilities of the skinny competitor who had laid down his intentions even further by taking the plunge to move to Belgium and also developed a useful knack for nailing holeshots. Cairoli threatened the GP-winning exploits of Ben Townley and Tyla Rattray that year and just 12 months on gave Yamaha their first ever MX2 crown, fittingly at Lierop. Cairoli has taken his critics and admirers on a journey of progression. It is almost impossible now to reconcile the mature and accomplished 450 rider who can pick off his peers at will with the bratty and impatient adolescent that aimed a swift kick at Davide Guarneri's head after he caused a fall in qualification for the GP of

France in 2005. In the early days he stumbled with his English, seemed disinterested in media work and hung around the De Carli truck like a small child unwillingly to let go of his mother's hand.

We first meet for this interview at his modest apartment in Lommel, a stone's lob from the team's workshop, which he shares with Dutch girlfriend of two years. As he grapples with the espresso machine to satisfy the caffeine needs of Ray Archer I nose around the place. Photos of him and Jill in various holiday locations line the shelves while a noisy music channel on the large screen TV provides the audio background.

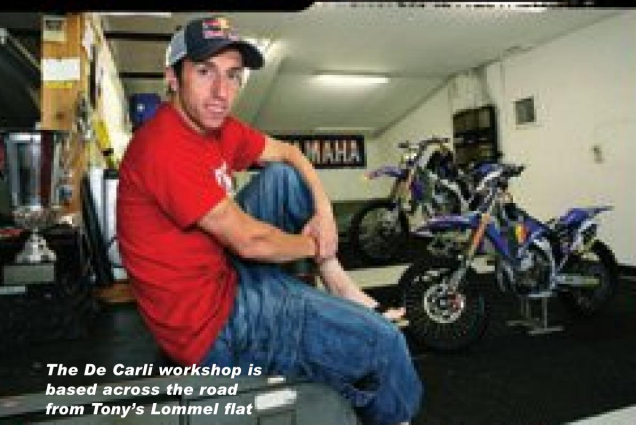
Jill, a beautician with her own salon, is preoccupied with organising her boyfriend's schedule for the upcoming Grand Prix of Belgium where Cairoli will be the subject of an announcement by KTM notifying the world that the rider and his team will be part of the factory Red Bull structure for 2010. Going orange will mean breaking a 17-year association with the Japanese for De Carli and a six-year relationship for his rider.

Cairoli should have been a Yamaha rider for 2010 – the last shift of a three-year deal – but the worldwide recession has bitten the Japanese hard with a profit downturn of 30 per cent this year compared to 2008. So the support and supply to De Carli went, creating a vacuum for Cairoli in which he eventually turned down a seat with the works Teka Suzuki team and elected to stay with his 'family' for at least a sixth season and attempt to win again on the Austrian's 450.

Cairoli is now a veteran of the interview. His English has been honed through years in the paddock and through the requirement of making friends in a strange country. He's notorious for allowing inconsistencies in his information – done more through absent-mindedness rather than intent – and can sometimes show an impatience for the question-and-answer process.

I have ghosted his column for Yamaha for two years now and we have done interviews on countless other occasions since 2004 so it's simple to work out whether Tony fancies a chat or will just bat away questions with irreverence. This morning he is happy to talk but senses that words on his plans for the future will soon be sought from many quarters and that this will be the start of a flood of questions from different quarters over the coming weeks... >>





The De Carli workshop is based across the road from Tony's Lommel flat



**DBR: Some people come to Belgium when they are just beginning their rise. You already had a podium in 2004 and were a true emerging star. Did people treat you differently or was your profile noticed by the locals and fans?**

**TC:** "Not so much. I had an impressive season but people didn't really recognise me. For the first year I was here it was not easy to settle or find a way of life but after the amount of time I spent riding and racing in this area I started to meet people and make friends. My English improved and that meant a barrier went down. The team have been here with me so that has always been a strong base. At the time Claudio Federici was the main rider and he became like a big brother to me, we had some good times in 2004 and 2005 together."

**DBR: You always seem to get on with your team-mates – you lived with the next one....**

**TC:** "Yeah, I have been lucky. When Matteo [Bonini] joined in 2006 we got on well and shared an apartment in Rome. We were more or less the same age so he became a good friend."

**DBR: How did you get together with Jill?**

**TC:** "We got together in 2007 but I had already been looking out for her before that. At Lierop in 2005 when I won the MX2 world championship for the first time she came over to say hi but I think I was so shocked I did not react! My English was also not great at that time. In Loket in 2006 she came to say ciao and we kept contact after that. In 2007 I made a move and was lucky!"

**DBR: Has it been easier to split your time away from Italy in the last few years because she has been here?**

**TC:** "Yeah, my sole purpose for coming to Belgium was about the training and riding and now there is much more reason to be here. Overall I spend about three months of the year here but the priorities have changed a little. I have swapped living with

a team-mate for the girlfriend."

**DBR: Is your life markedly different here compared to Sicily?**

**TC:** "Quite a lot. Most of the time Jill and I eat together but for lunch I am here on my own. In Sicily there always seems to be a minimum of 10 people around the table for lunch. My father has a farm and my sister lives nearby and has two kids. My aunt comes over a lot also. Then there is the weather, the beach...quite a few things."

**DBR: You moved in 2004 and you won the title in 2005. Do you need to come to Belgium to win?**

**TC:** "I believe so. All the fastest riders are based in the region or country. I could not get to the same level doing this in Italy. There are some good tracks and of course the sand here and the access is the important thing."

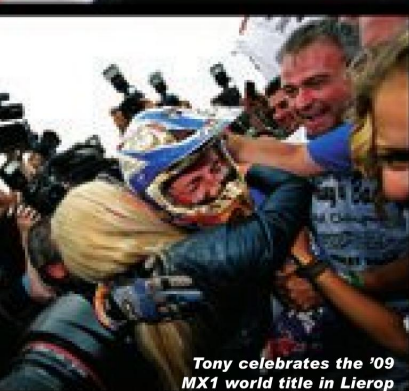
**DBR: Some people say it is impossible to have friends in racing...**

**TC:** "That is not true. The other night we went out to a street concert in Lommel town centre and this was only a few days before the race and someone commented to me something like 'how can I be out late?' I then pointed out that the guy next to me, Max Nagl, was second in the championship! I get on well with Max. I think if you respect a rider then it is possible to have him or her as a friend."

**DBR: You and Jill are always seen together at the track. How important is she to your racing?**

**TC:** "For sure she is important. She knows when not to push on a subject and I don't like many people's opinions about what I should do on the track. I don't like the bossy kind of girlfriend who thinks that she knows everything. Jill gives me my space when I am riding and helps me organise things away from the bike."

**DBR: I imagine the last month has probably been one of the most difficult in your career and it is clear just how important Claudio is to you...**



Tony celebrates the '09 MX1 world title in Lierop



Team boss Claudio De Carli







*Living with Jill has made life away from Italy easier for Tony*



**TC:** "Yes, I had a lot of thinking to do and it was a big decision but the team is really like a family for me. I know the mechanics so well and Claudio is such a big help when it comes to advice or setting up the bike. It was not difficult to decide to stay. Claudio and I talked a lot about what we could do and his father was also giving me advice."

**DBR:** Does it bother you that some people might question why you didn't sign for a factory team or chase a direct link to Japan?

**TC:** "People in the past have asked me 'why are you not a factory Yamaha rider' and I reply that it didn't matter. Why do I need to be in a factory team when I am winning titles and races?"

**DBR:** How did you feel when it was clear that being a Yamaha rider was no longer a possibility?

**TC:** "It was hard to understand when they said there was no future for me but yet the other Yamaha team kept going but I guess that is their strategy and they need to do what is right for them. I hope next year they can also get good results. I felt a bit sad both for me and also for them. I had been a Yamaha rider for a few years now and had a lot of fun and also a lot of satisfaction."

**DBR:** So, KTM then...

**TC:** "Yes! The first thing I am curious about is trying the bike and to get it working how I like. I am really excited to try it and I feel like a new adventure is close. KTM plan to work very closely with us to develop the bike. We will be a factory team with a direct connection."

**DBR:** You might actually get a holeshot next season then...

**TC:** "I hope so [laughs]! It might make things easier for me than having to start in the top 10..."

Over a month later we speak again in the press room in Brazil when Cairoli has been world champion for two weeks. He squeezed in a visit to Misano for the 13th

MotoGP race of the season in which he was feted by motocross fans such as Rossi, Melandri (with who he has trained in the past), Dovizioso and Hayden.

He was also given a surprisingly big ovation by the public while riding around the track service road on his scooter – a clear sign that Cairoli and his motocross skills are breaking through to a bigger audience in Italy.

And he is clearly also a big star in South America. The Brazilian fans constantly mob the rider and he barely has a moment's peace in the makeshift paddock complex. He will finish sixth in Brazil for a damp ending to his season but the real achievement had already been marked.

**DBR:** When did your knee problem begin? It must have given you a scare for the title?

**TC:** "At a local club where I was practising. It began to hurt and then swelled up. A few days before Lierop I went to the hospital for a scan and they saw that a small piece of meniscus had broken loose. The normal process was to have an operation to fix it but there was no time before Lierop. I still don't know why it happened, perhaps just through running or training, maybe it was also an effect of my accident in South Africa that was not quite right. I was worried ahead of the Dutch GP. I really wanted to win the championship there so that the long trip to Brazil would be more relaxed and I knew that if I did not have the knee problem there was a very good chance of that."

**DBR:** So how did it feel crossing that line for the second time in four years as champion?

**TC:** "Indescribable. There was a lot going on. I saw many people, the team, my family, the press waiting at the line and the next 15 minutes were pretty crazy. Matteo and some other riders stopped to congratulate me and then we somehow made it to the podium. I had time to think about my first title in 2005 – there were less people then but the feeling of excitement was the same."



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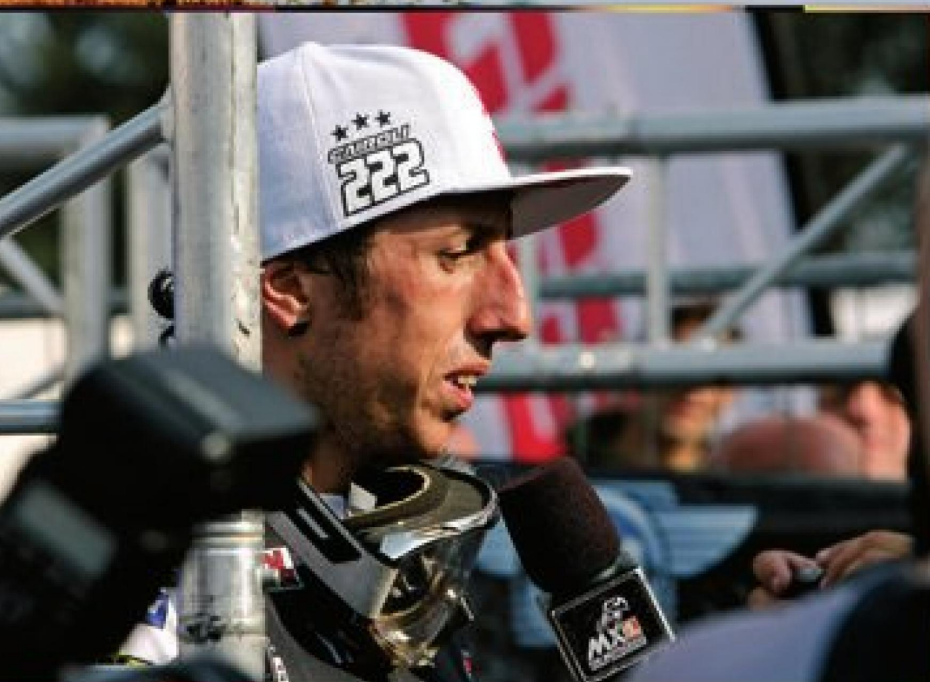
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Tony kicks back at his Lommel apartment



The three-time world champion is one of the most exciting riders in modern motocross



#### DBR: And the party?

TC: "After the press conference we went back to the team and opened the champagne. We stayed there for some time but then headed to Lommel where I had a meal with my family at a bar-restaurant where they had reserved a special corner for us. The team arrived later and we danced and drank until about 4am, well I wasn't dancing because the knee was painful again. Tanel gave me a bottle of Estonian vodka and the effect was almost like the pain-killing injection I had earlier in the day!"

#### DBR: Are you aware of your profile in Italy? How popular you have become...

TC: "Yes, it has surprised me how well known I have become and that is really nice. That reception at Misano was unexpected. It does make things a bit easier when you are talking to people who might become sponsors. I like to have a lot of fans and I try to do what I can for them."

#### DBR: Does it mean more to be MX1 champion over MX2?

TC: "For me it is the same, I do not feel a change of status. I can understand how other people might see it as more important. It is good to have three titles and be the same as Chicco but it is not enough yet to be the best Italian motocrosser. I have more GP wins but I need at least another championship."

#### DBR: Any other goals in life? Children?

TC: "Children no! Not yet. My goal is to keep having fun in my life."

#### DBR: What are you going to do with the bonus?

TC: "Ha! I don't know yet, probably buy some more property but I am not sure where."





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# PRIZE FIGHTER!

THIS YEAR'S KXF IS QUITE POSSIBLY THE BEST 450 STOCKER ON THE MARKET BUT HAVE THE GUYS IN THE GREEN CORNER COME OUT THROWING PUNCHES FOR 2010

Words by Jeff Perrett Photos by rayarcher.com

If there was any small and lingering disappointment at Kawasaki HQ at losing James Stewart to Yamaha it must have soon been forgotten after they produced arguably the bike of '09 in the 450 class. It was a real makeover and a fresh start.

Kawasaki have had an amazing programme going in the States for a while – particularly with the success they've had with the Pro Circuit team – but here in Europe it hasn't come so freely. Kawasaki's last world title was in 2006 when Christophe Pourcel won the MX2 crown but there was only limited success before him, again from fellow Frenchmen Mickael Maschio and Sebastien Tortelli – but Seb's wins came in the previous millennium.

Now I'm putting this down to bad luck because, believe me, Kawasaki don't produce a bike that isn't capable and I was privileged to be involved in part of the development process a few years ago. I say privileged – I literally took three layers of skin off my ass cheeks and was partially disabled for close to three weeks after endless testing, day after day after day. I never want to do that again – unless it's bedroom-related. So trust me when I say Kawasaki put a lot into their R&D and never was that more evident than the end of last year when they introduced the 2009 EFI KX450.

So where have they gone from there? Well onwards and upwards but not with such a big step, opting instead to make small refined changes to both the engine and the chassis to try and keep the positive momentum going and they've succeeded. It still has the same characteristics – like good turning ability and useable torque – but now it's that little bit sharper. Like a boxer who's just put that extra bit of training in for his next fight even though he won his last one convincingly – basically Kawasaki haven't got complacent with this one.

Let's start with the motor – it makes sense as it was the first thing that I noticed after looking across to Ray Archer who was snapping away with his camera and realising I was travelling much faster than I thought.

It still has a lovely, noticeable torque from the bottom but now it just has more of it – or so it feels. So it's quicker but not in a way that terrifies you, in fact as I said it's quite deceiving really. Again, it's probably the little changes all coming together that help this happen.

There's a new bridged-box bottomed piston that uses the same design from this year's factory models. The intake valve timing is two degrees forward (which has also reduced a little amount of vibration), the crankshaft has a higher inertial mass giving better traction and the new one-piece stainless steel exhaust pipe is 40mm shorter to offer up more mid to high rev performance. It all works and works well.

In the deep, wet sand of Finningley it cuts through better when you ride taller gears and use the torque and not the high revs and there was less bog as you pulled through the gears. If you compare that with the 2009 model it's where the differences are most noticeable. Obviously out of the crate the Electronic Fuel Injection (EFI) settings are for the best all-round performance but you can tell that if you fancied making this more of a hard-hitting rocket it has the brute power to do so – for an aspiring pro that's a good sign.

The ECU which controls the fuel injection has been revised from last year giving it better response from the bottom through to the mid-range so together with the changes that give the KX450 a little more high-rev performance it's quite a power package. And as we race into the future of EFI it really is getting harder to see how they are going to make these bikes more responsive, I'm sure they will but I'm struggling to see how.

The reaction time is almost in sync with the human body, think as the throttle as your brain and the rear wheel as your hand. When your brain tells your hand to move the throttle works in the same way with the rear wheel – in a fraction of a second. There's also new thicker and wider radiators with more space between the fins to keep the engine temps down a fraction and maintain performance and

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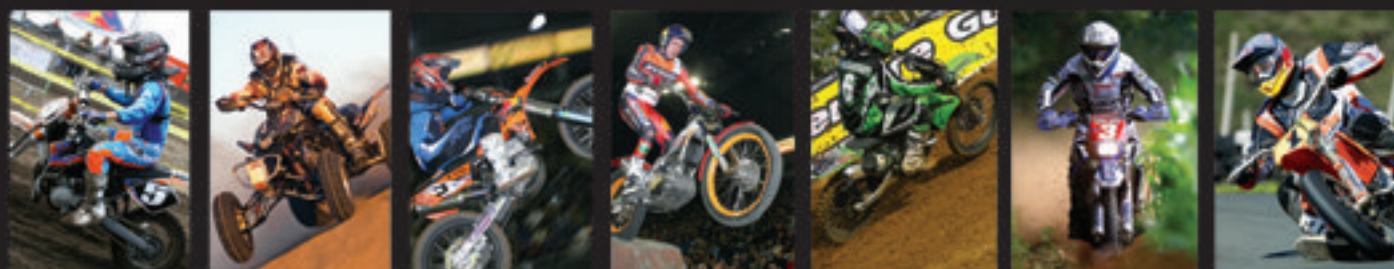




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Jeff plays in the sand at  
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## KX450F

### SPECIFICATIONS >>

**Capacity:** 449cc  
**Bore and stroke:** 96mm x 62.1mm  
**Transmission:** Five-speed  
**Fuel capacity:** Seven litres  
**Front suspension:** Kayaba 48mm  
(315mm travel)  
**Rear suspension:** Kayaba  
(315mm travel)  
**Wheelbase:** 1480mm  
**Ground Clearance:** 340mm  
**Seat height:** 965mm  
**Kerb weight:** 113.5kg



durability, another plus if not necessarily instantly noticeable. So from an engine point of view it appears to have all bases covered.

The bike is just a little bit more nimble to throw around too. There's a new steering stem that Kawasaki say gives a 'lighter' feel. You have to believe them after riding the bike. It does feel a little wider when you sit on it compared to some of its rivals – that's probably due to the new radiators – but to be fair you soon tend to forget about that when you start riding.

Since I first raced a Kawasaki in 1997 I've always found them to be a well-balanced bike when it comes to the suspension and I'm happy to say my opinion hasn't changed there either. The rear shock is plusher than ever proving that the 'Kashima' coating works. Kawasaki claim it reduces friction and heat build-up so the performance is not only better but also more consistent throughout a moto – again, I'm not going to argue that fact with them. I actually think for the average guy they have it close to bang on with the suspension and you can never be totally

bang on because we all ride different and weigh different.

None of this 'the forks are too soft or too hard' or 'the valving is harsh in the shock' for the average guy. Where both units are set and with the adjustment you have available to you I don't think there's any real panic to get them revalved or run different springs on either the front or the rear. The new spring rate on the rear is an improvement and definitely is in sync with the front forks that also have new spring rates and different settings.

It has a new, different cross-section on the swingarm and also new linkage ratios. It's well balanced, it sits at an ideal ride height and with a nice moveable riding position there's nothing that really sets the alarm bells ringing in your noggin. All groovy and all hip at this disco, so get up and dance.

The brake pads are new and now give a firmer stopping power but thankfully without snatching and wanting to ping you over the bars or make you stall in every corner. Let's be

honest, none of us want to be kicking over a hot engine during a race, looking like a festering dog with fleas while the people you really want to beat ride by. Luckily, the Kawasaki starts relatively easily but there's never any real guarantees until everyone goes the KTM route with an electric start. The clutch is also better this year, it's lighter still and combines well with good, smooth shifting through the gearbox. Material has been trimmed from the spring holders and the outer side of the clutch plate which improves the oil drainage and optimises rigidity and it gels well with the crankshaft and the bottom section of the motor.

This new, sharper, more aggressive fighter may not look any leaner on the outside but on the inside it's stronger than it's ever been. It has better durability to go with its new edge and with all of its competition putting in the extra work too it might just need it to win the fight in the heavyweight division. I guess we'll all know when we get a few rounds in but it's definitely a safe bet though, without question.



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WITH THE MOTOCROSS DES NATIONS PITCHING CAMP IN ITALY FOR ONLY THE THIRD TIME IN ITS ILLUSTRIOUS HISTORY, JACK TAKES US BACK TO THE MARVELLOUS, MAGICAL, MAGNIFICENT MAGGIORA...

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle

**U**p until 2005 we called it the FIM Motocross des Nations, or 'MX des' for short. Since then it's been renamed the FIM Motocross of Nations in deference to that most widely used mother tongue, English (though 'MX of' doesn't have quite the same ring!).

The 63rd edition of the world's greatest motocross contest was scheduled to revisit Italy on the final weekend of September. And, remarkably, it would be held in Italy for only the third time ever. With the sport now largely governed by Italians how amazing is that!

The last occasion Italy hosted the MX des was when the USA famously dominated in 1986. Previous to that it was held there in 1970 – but otherwise, never! Belgium and Great Britain have welcomed the event nine times apiece, the Netherlands eight and France on seven occasions. Sweden have held five – the last back in 1990 – Germany and Switzerland (remember our glorious triumph 15 summers ago?) four apiece and Spain, Finland, the USA, Czecho and, until this year, Italy just twice. Which leaves Austria, Australia, Brazil, Russia and Denmark (in 1955) on one each.

Both Italy's team classics took place, appropriately, at their most iconic race track. The 'Mottaccio del Balmone' – just outside Maggiora to the north west of Milan amid the lakes of the Alpine foothills – is a circuit of breath-taking beauty. The 'Maggiorese Sports Union', established in 1945, began promoting motocross there in 1963 and ran its first grand prix within three years, a 500cc round won by the fearfully fast East German Paul Friedrichs on a factory CZ!

Four years later the MX des arrived. Sweden – then the powerhouse of world motocross – fielded Friedrich's successor as 500 world champion, Bengt Aberg. Alongside him all mounted on Husqvarnas – except the greatest 'nearly man' of them all, Ake Jonsson (Maico) – were Christer Hammargren, Gunnar Johansson and Arne Kring. They beat youthful defending champions Belgium, represented by Sylvain Geboers (Suzuki), Roger De Coster (CZ) and Husky duo Jaak van Velthoven and Jeff Teuwissen. Third was the CZ-mounted Czech trio of Toman, Hammerschmidt and Jiri Stodulka, led by absolute Eastern European legend Vlastimil Valek on a Jawa!

JOHNSON + O'MARA  
DOMINATE FIRST MOTO  
OF 1986 MX DES NATIONS

A decade would elapse before Maggiora welcomed back another world team championship. This time it was the 250cc Trophée des Nations, a competition that ran from 1961 until 1984. An outstanding trio of reigning world champions, Georges Jobe and Harry Everts (Suzukis) and Andre Malherbe (Honda) were joined by Yamaha's Andre Vromans to claim Belgium's 10th successive victory. The high spot of a wicked, sun-baked weekend, though, had to be dashing local hotshot Maurizio Dolce's shimmering second race win on a Maico that had the whole crazy valley in uproar!

Two years later the first Italian 250 GP to reach Maggiora was won by Flying Dutchman Kees van der Ven (KTM). After his close friend Heinz Kinigadner (Yamaha) had beaten Kees and Jobe in race one (the first GP moto win of Kni's career), van der Ven turned the tables and pitched himself right into the title frame by leading home Yamaha's dynamic champion elect Danny LaPorte.

Then came that mighty MX des on another scorching weekend in 1986. American Honda trio David Bailey (500), Rick Johnson (250) and Johnny O'Mara (125) were all at the top of their game. AMA 500 champ Bailey, who would be tragically paralysed four months later, was racing what would be his last outdoor overseas international. O'Mara already knew he was out of Honda for '87 after two years without a title and Johnson, the reigning AMA SX and 250 National champion, was reaching the coruscating peak of his mercurial

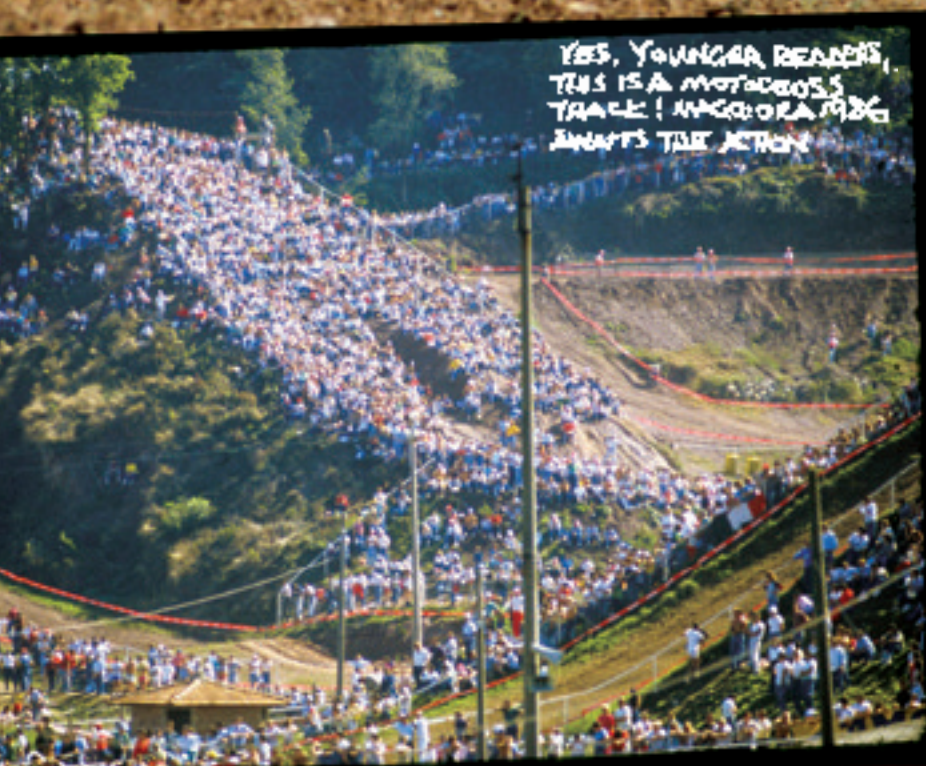






**JACK BURNICLE** is the godfather (our words, not his) of British MX journalism. Born in Billingham, County Durham, to Belta and nutty (his words, not ours) musical genius Stan Burnicle, Jack was mad about cars and motor racing as a kid. At sweet 16 he got a motorbike, rode it to a local 'scramble' and was instantly, hopelessly hooked. Next time he went he

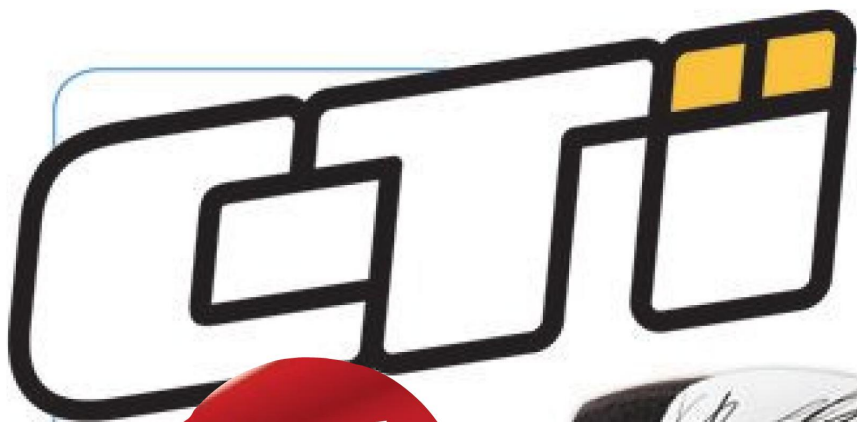
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O'MARA SWOOPS OFF THE 500s DURING HIS FAMOUS 2nd RACE RIDE IN 1986



ANDY NEAVE WAISTLES HIS BIKE INTO FOURTH PLACE IN THE 1990 ITALIAN 250 GP AGAINST AN AMERICAN BACKLASH



KEES VAN DER VEN (KTM) WINS THE 1992 ITALIAN 250 GP



but unkindly brief career.

'RJ' and the 'O'Show dominated the first moto, in the days when 250s and 125s scored separately, to yield a perfect 1-1 scoreline although third-placed Michele Rinaldi had the fans in a frenzy! Then O'Mara, in an extraordinary feat of scorching finesse, flew past all the 500s except Bailey in race two with world champions Kinigadner, Carlqvist, Jobe and Thorpe (whose Honda had burned out its back brake) all falling to the ballistic blond Californian. "To me, Johnny was the best 125 rider ever, the way he applied the power," reckoned Rick Johnson. "He was driving deep into the corners and railing turns harder than anybody else at Maggiora. He pushed the hell out of me through the entire first race, trying to prove to Honda that they let the wrong man go!"

Another 1-1 scoreline meant the States were already unbeatable and in race three Bailey and Johnson rode across the line together after overwhelming Thorpe, hand in lofted hand, to signal the greatest US demolition job ever. Brave Brits Jem Whatley (250 Cagiva), Rob Herring (125 Kawasaki) and Thorpe finished second and third place was gloriously grabbed by Italians Rinaldi (250 Suzuki), Corrado Maddii (500 Kawasaki) and Massimo Contini (125 Cagiva) – the first time Italy had ever mounted an MX des Nations rostrum!

It was also the last time 'the Nations' landed on Italian soil, although magnificent Maggiora played out several more sparkling GPs – none more so than the second round of the 1990 250 world series. Explosive Alessandro Puzar, mounted on Rinaldi's Chesterfield Suzuki, had run away with the opener in Austria so another massive, expectant crowd crammed the steep, grassy slopes beneath Maggiora's mediaeval hilltop town.

But 'Crazy Horse' crashed in the first turn before staging a mental recovery from last to fourth behind race winner Trampas Parker (KTM) who had edged him out of the 125 crown eight months earlier. Puzar then wowed his supporters with a rousing race two victory, snatched the overall verdict from his pal Parker and embarked on a winning roll of six out of the first seven GPs!

In September 1992 I was invited to a special 'World Cross Cup' featuring new world champions Jobe, Donnie Schmit and Greg Albertyn alongside 'La Sfida del Secolo' ('The Challenge of the Century'), a race for past heroes. Legends like Harry Everts (Puch), Corrado Maddii (Cagiva), Hakan Andersson (Husqvarna), De Coster (Honda), Jacky Vimond (Yamaha), Dolce (Maico) and Michele Rinaldi (Gilera) were reunited with the machines that made them famous!

"I have not competed in five years," wrote modest Michele in the programme intro. "So I hope you will all be very understanding and not arrive armed with rotten tomatoes. Do not hesitate to come and say hello. After all, we were once good friends!"

No danger of rotten tomatoes! Instead, inspired fans daubed 'FORZA RINALDI' in huge white letters on Maggiora's steepest downhill! The meeting, held to celebrate the life and recent death of popular French photographer Patrick Boulland, was cruelly drenched in driving rain but still produced wonderful entertainment for an emotional crowd.

In 1995 it was the turn of another Italian, Andrea Bartolini (Yamaha), to beat American duo Tallon Vohland and Bob Moore in a 250 GP. Two years later Puzar, on a TM, was back to win a tie-breaker with Chico Chiodi in Maggiora's only 125 GP before Pit Beirer (250 Honda) broke the Italian stranglehold in 1999 ahead of David Vuillemin and yet another American export, Ryan Hughes.

So it's been 10 years since Maggiora witnessed world championship action. True, it still hosts national rounds (like so many famous circuits in France, the UK and elsewhere) but I'll never give up hope that this towering natural coliseum may one day light up our MX lives and TV screens again!



*After a sucky '09 season  
Billy's looking to spend  
a year Down Under*







© Sarah Gutierrez

# <sup>G A P</sup> YEAR!

AFTER AN INJURY-PLAGUED SEASON FROM HELL, BILLY MACKENZIE HAS DECIDED TO TAKE A YEAR OUT FROM EUROPE AND WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP MOTOCROSS AND RACE THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL SERIES. WE HOOKED UP WITH THE 25-YEAR-OLD SCOT TO FIND OUT HIS REASONS FOR PACKING UP AND HEADING OFF DOWN UNDER...

Words by Jeff Perrett Photos by Suttty





**B**illy MacKenzie has been running down the dream of winning a world title since he burst onto the GP scene as a fresh-faced teenager bristling with attitude and opinion. Now he's off to Australia to race has that dream died and his opinions and attitude changed?

While frantically running around at the final Red Bull Pro National I bumped into Billy who was spectating. "Do you want to meet up in the week? I've got something to tell you," he said. "Yeah, okay. What is it?" I replied. "I'll tell you when we meet up, you'll like it, bring your Dictaphone!"

Sounded interesting and when Billy's got something to say it's usually worth listening to. So meet with Billy I did at TGI Friday's in Southampton. It was convenient for us both – 30 minutes for me and even closer for Billy now he's back living in Southampton in the house he bought several years ago when he was racing for Steve Dixon's Yamaha team at the time I last interviewed him in full. He's been on quite a journey since, both physically and mentally...

There's no doubt that MacKenzie has that Marmite effect – you either love him or hate him. He's opinionated, passionate, deeply philosophical and far more intelligent than he cares to show. I've known him for long enough to know that he lives life in the moment and needs

constant stimulation of his mind and body.

To many he comes across as a complicated character when in actual fact there's nothing complicated about Billy at all. What you see and what you hear is – more often than not – exactly what you get. No hidden agendas, no political spin, simply a young man who believes in his own ability and most importantly in himself and the decisions he makes.

"What's all this about then – are you quitting motocross to become a new age hippy?" I joke, a loose reference to his travelling experiences in Australia and Thailand with Jason Dougan last winter. "Ha, kind of," he replies. "I'm off to race in Australia next year!"

After initial disbelief it's just a matter of moments before I've warmed to the idea and in my head already believe it's the best decision and opportunity for Billy MacKenzie at this moment in his life and his career. Before he can start force-feeding me his excitement I've already made my mind up that this isn't just a whim – oh no, something as radical as this has been on his mind for a while.

We all know the story of Billy's nightmare season – starting the year with tendonitis, his huge crash at Langrish, playing catch-up on both bike fitness and bike set-up, then a thumb injury that finally put paid to 2009. Billy was hacked off – so many people who were supporting him the

previous year were now on his case like so often happens when professional sports stars go off the boil. He's always enjoyed playing the pantomime baddy – it's in his nature to thrive on it – but in the off-season MacKenzie had got his head down and put the work in and felt it was unjust. He'd put everything he had into it and fallen short for reasons out of his control and felt completely over it all...

"It got to the point where I knew it was over – get the surgery and just walk from it and think what I really want out of this. In that time a lot of things went through my head. I knew I wasn't in the running for a GP deal because I'd done nothing. I was over motocross and wanted away from it. My race kit from my last GP in Germany stayed dirty in my bag for well over a month. I just literally stopped. I thought about quitting altogether but soon realised I'd get bored quickly. I need the buzz of racing and going for it – it's all I know, it's all I'm good at and it's what gives me an income so I started weighing up my opportunities within the sport. That's when I started to think about Australia."

More difficult times were just around the corner for Billy – after all it's not every day you decide to leave your family and friends and set up camp on the other side of the globe. But what seemed right to him didn't necessarily sit too well with the people around him.



"The decisions I've made are crystal clear for me but they're not clear for everyone else. Because they're not clear for everyone else it starts to put doubt in my head. This whole Australia thing is what I want to do right now. It has all stemmed from my travelling holiday and I've realised there's been this little bit of life that I've missed that I have an opportunity to do right here, right now. If I hadn't had this bad year I wouldn't be going, it's that simple.

"In 2008 I loved everything in life and I carried that to an even higher plain in the off-season. I came back from Australia and Thailand highly motivated and there's nothing to say I won't come back feeling that way again. I'm not going to Australia because I'm over it over here in the GPs, not because of how they're run, not because of the politics of it, not because of any team issues or anything like that. I'm going to Australia because an exciting opportunity came my way, I've had a bad year and with the whole economic crisis and whatnot I feel it's a good time to experience it.

"In my mind I still want to be a world champion – that hasn't changed – but everyone that has ever won a world championship has walked a different path and gone through s\*\*t to get there. At this moment this is right for me. I loved my time in Australia, I'd like a different challenge, I'd like a year to get focused and free

my head. I put everything into this year, it feels like I gave my all and got nothing back. Instead of going at it again and being knocked down again which I kind of feel would happen I want to go and build again and come in through the back door completely refreshed. I've been doing this straight since I left school and I guess the pressure built and built and it all came tumbling down this year."

Quite clearly the year has taken its toll and that alone would be enough to make anyone look for a new lease of life. But it hasn't been solely a screwed up season that's made Billy think that a change of scenery would do him good. It was also seeing that scenery first hand. In this case Billy had seen the greener grass and it was on the other side of the world, not just over the fence.

"I had the time of my life when I was travelling. You need to live your life in the present tense and I never really realised that until I went travelling. I'd seen my friends from school go travelling and thought 'I'd love to do that but I can't', then I got one month of my life and the security to do it. I realised after coming back you don't really need money to have a fruitful life, you need it to function but it's not the be all and end all. You have to love what you do and believe in it.

"I remember staying in a backpacker lodge >>



Billy bites the dust at round two of the Maxxis series

## DEATH OR GLORY!

ALL-OUT EFFORT FROM THE MAN WHO RACES TO WIN

A day or so before our interview Billy was once again in the frame for the British MXdN team after his good friend Brad Anderson was forced to pull out with injury. With this fact fresh in my mind I had to ask him if he would have done things differently in 2008 after his death or glory last few laps raised Team GB onto the podium – and then dumped us off it again when he crashed at the bitter end...

"No. No way. If I had of ridden around Donington half-arsed and not got the result I would've felt more guilty for doing that and everyone would've been pissed anyway. If I had rode around s\*\*t and not crashed or done my best and we didn't get third on the podium and still got fourth everyone would've been 'oh for Christ sake Bill, what was that? You can ride quicker than that'. So what do you do?

"I race to win, I tried my hardest and I don't regret pushing it. I came from way down to close in on the leaders and was the only rider really coming through in that race. If I hadn't done that we would've never even been in a position to challenge for the win anyway. This year I'll ride with everything I have, if it's mathematically impossible to gain a position then maybe I'd back it down. Who knows? Let's just see what happens!"



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Billy takes his first  
Maxxis moto win of  
the year at Landrake



with some Belgian kid and we got talking about motocross. When he found out who I was he couldn't believe that I would be staying in a backpacker lodge and not a swanky hotel and that made me realise it's actually all about your memories and that time travelling will always be with me.

"So when I started looking at the options for 2010 I instantly thought of Australia and I started to talk with Craig [Elwell – owner of DEP Pipes and one of Billy's closest friends] and he said he'd ask his distributor out there if there were any rides going. There seemed an interest so while I was laid up injured I went out there with Craig as he had to see his distributor anyway. I met up with Troy Carroll [the Kawasaki team boss] and just introduced myself. He didn't know who I was – he'd heard of me but didn't recognise me or anything. I told him all of the reasons I wanted to come over and didn't bulls\*\*t him and it went from there. Troy is young and cool and I still have a good relationship with the guys at Kawasaki Japan. The team out there have factory support so it all just fits, I already feel like a new person and I'm so excited."

Billy's now in full flow. He knows he's doing the right thing – for him and him alone – and you have to admire anyone that has the power of conviction to do that because all too often many don't and a conscience of doing what feels right for others overwhelms. He's young but mature enough to know an opportunity like this may not come along again.

"I want to go over there and absolutely enjoy every moment. I just want to enjoy riding my bike again and everything that goes with it. Those

last few GPs were torture. I'd still work hard in the week but turn up at the weekend and think 'I do not want to be here. What's the point? I can't ride how I want'. I could not go through that every weekend just picking up a pay cheque. I literally went from a massive high to a massive low and I'd never been to either of those places until this year and I'll admit it – it's taken a lot out of me. In Oz I will be getting up to beautiful sunshine and running down the beach, getting my mind straight, enjoying my racing again, regrouping and coming back a more polished rider and person.

"I didn't feel comfortable thinking about training in the winter with bad weather again, racing all the same tracks. I just thought 'I need a break'. I've lived in Europe for 25 years, raced GPs, won GPs and it's like a huge stop sign got put in front of me. It's a new challenge and I'm sure in all walks of life people feel the same at some point but they don't always get the opportunity to make a change because of family commitments and whatnot. Well I have that opportunity and I want to take it. It's where I'm at. The best deal for me was Australia.

"This is a big decision – huge in fact, the biggest of my life so far. If I decided to stay in the UK I know I'd be thinking about Australia all the time and how I feel right now I don't think I would've been able to break that mindset. I'd constantly be thinking 'what if' and that would do me in. I can now go, experience it, taste it and I'm certain I'll come back with no regrets."



Don't miss the full interview at  
[www.dirtbikerider.com](http://www.dirtbikerider.com)



*The Flying Finn has won five world titles in his 10 years on the WEC scene*





# FINN-ISHIED!

HE'S ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL AND ENTERTAINING WEC RIDERS OF ALL TIME AND AFTER 10 YEARS OF INTERNATIONAL ENDURO COMPETITION FUN-LOVING FINN SAMULI ARO HAS DECIDED TO HANG UP HIS BOOTS

Words and photos by Jonty Edmunds

**I**f there's one rider who knows how to enjoy himself both during competition and away from racing it's Samuli Aro. No matter if he's trying to win a World Enduro Championship title, spending time with his family at home in Finland or at the bar enjoying a few post race drinks, there's one thing you can be sure of – Samuli will be enjoying himself. Always has done and, despite having decided now is the time to step away from top-level enduro sport, always will do.

Samuli – or Big S as he signs himself off at the bottom of an email – is one of the WEC's most successful riders. He's also one of the sport's true characters. He's a fun-loving, tobacco-chewing, mini-bike riding, five-time enduro world champion whose personality, effortless riding style and laidback attitude to seemingly everything sets him apart from many of his rivals.

Averaging one world title for every two years of his 10-year career, Samuli is without question one of the all-time enduro greats. Preferring coffee to sports energy drinks, Corona to carbohydrates and having spent about as much time in a gym as he has in a submarine during his career, Aro has always done things his way. Often spending little time on a bike from the end of one season to the start on the next, his effortless style and hunger to succeed has seen him beat – among others – the likes of Johnny Aubert, Mika Ahola, David Knight and Stefan Merriman.

**DBR: First things first Samuli, why have you decided to retire?**

**SA:** "I've been competing in the WEC for 10 years now and although that's not the longest time I've seen enough and achieved enough. I feel it's the right time for me to stop. My motivation isn't as strong as it needs to be to commit to winning more championships. Now I want to find new goals. There are many small reasons that when I put them all together helped me reach the decision to retire – like the fact that my son, Empo, is growing up. I want to spend more time at home with my family.

"If I want to fight for more world titles I need to be 100 per cent focused on that. I don't want to make that level of commitment anymore. So if I'm not 100 per cent committed then I'm not going to race in the WEC. I don't want to go to

racers just to collect a salary and be happy finishing between fourth and 10th."

**DBR: Is your decision to retire one made recently or something you've been thinking about for a while?**

**SA:** "The first time I thought about retiring was at the end of '02, which might sound strange. I made a three-year contract with KTM then after I left Husqvarna. I was going to stop at the end of those three years. KTM asked me to extend that contract so I signed for another two years. Then again they wanted to extend it by another two years which I did. In '08 the plan was to race in the WEC and for '09 I was supposed to race the US GNCC series. But because of the economical problems we had to forget that. I knew this last contract with KTM was going to be my last. But it was earlier this year that I made the final decision to retire."

**DBR: This season has been a mixed one for you. Are you happy with what will be your last ever WEC season?**

**SA:** "I guess most riders would like to win a championship and then retire but that's hard to do. After winning last year I knew it would be hard to win this year. I'm fairly happy with my '09 season. I'm happy because I tried my best, the other riders were just faster than me. I tried everything I could, I just couldn't match their pace at all races. I certainly don't have any regrets. My final position isn't what I wanted because I wanted to win. My best wasn't enough. Although I had decided that '09 would be my last year I still gave it my best. My finger injury meant that I couldn't finish the season but on day one in Greece, my last WEC race, without my mistakes my speed was really good. I'm pleased about that."

**DBR: Looking back over your career are you pleased with the way it's gone?**

**SA:** "I made 10 years in the WEC and I finished third one year, runner-up twice and won five titles so it's been a fantastic time. I broke my wrist at the second round of the championship in '00 so that wasn't a good year for me. From '01 until '08 I finished top three each year so I couldn't have asked for much more."

**DBR: The WEC has changed a lot during your time – have they been good changes?**

**SA:** "Some changes have been very good. Generally, the >>



# FOR THE RECORD

## ARO'S WEC TIMELINE >>

'00	Yamaha YZ250	Eighth 250cc two-stroke WEC
'01	Husqvarna WR250	Third 250cc two-stroke WEC
'02	Husqvarna WR250	First 250cc two-stroke WEC
'03	KTM 250EXC	Second 250cc two-stroke WEC
'04	KTM 525 EXC	First E3 WEC
'05	KTM 450 EXC	First E2 WEC
'06	KTM 450 EXC	First E2 WEC
'07	KTM 450 EXC	Second E2 WEC
'08	KTM 300 EXC	First E3 WEC
'09	KTM 300 EXC	Fourth E3 WEC





*Celebrating world title #5 with his team at the end of the '08 season*

*Samuli gets stuck into a Friday night 'Super Test'*

series is a lot better than it used to be. The paddock looks much better than it used to do. I think the image of the series is much better. I don't like the extreme tests but mostly the changes have been good. It's stupid and boring to put all your riding gear on to compete in the Super Test on Friday night but when you're riding it's actually quite good fun. It's just the extreme tests I don't like."

**DBR: You're known as a KTM rider but your time in the WEC started with Yamaha. How was your first WEC season 10 years ago?**

**SA:** "My first year in '00 was a learning year, not only for me but also for the team because it was totally new. Everything was new but it was great fun because every day was new and exciting. It was a new job to me, I went riding in new places and got to meet new people. It was the perfect step for me because it was a gentle step to make from being a privateer to being a beginner professional rider."

"Joining Husqvarna was another, different step. And then joining KTM was, I guess, my third and final step. But joining Yamaha was perfect for me at the start of my career. It was a nice time. I was inexperienced, nervous and crashing all the time. I broke my wrist at the second round of the series which was disappointing but I enjoyed my time with the team."

**DBR: You joined Husqvarna in '02. Do you agree that's when you went from being a fast young rider with a lot of promise to a bona fide world championship contender?**

**SA:** "It was a second new start in as many years with a new bike and team. It was easy joining the team because Petteri Silvan [Finnish four-time world champion] was there and he helped me a lot. My biggest help was Tulio Provini, my mechanic. We had a very special mechanic/rider relationship. It was a difficult time because there wasn't so much money within the team. Some times it was really hard because of the lack of money but I was really happy that we all had such a great time. The factory had money problems but within the team we tried to stay happy. We laughed and joked about everything. We really had a great time. In '01 I was fast but making mistakes and crashing too much but in '02 I figured out my rhythm. I guess that's when things changed for me and '02 was one of my best seasons – I have so many great memories from that year. Winning my first world title with Husqvarna was amazing."

**DBR: You stayed with Husqvarna for two years. Was joining KTM an easy decision to make?**

**SA:** "Leaving Husqvarna wasn't easy. I was really happy with the team but the problem was that both Petteri and I both got tired of the constant explanations Husqvarna were giving us about why we weren't getting paid. They had financial problems then and I lost count of the number of times >>





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they said 'we'll pay you tomorrow'. Without the financial problem I might still be riding for Husqvarna. Joining KTM, the most professional team in the WEC, was the final step of my career. If you ride for KTM you have to make the results they expect of you which means a little more pressure. But I was ready for that. From the start they worked extremely hard to ensure that I was completely happy with my equipment. With the KTM factory, Farioli team and all of the team's sponsors putting in 100 per cent effort you have to do the same."

**DBR: You didn't win in your first season with KTM but back-to-back titles in '04, '05 and '06 must have been more than you could have wished for?**

**SA:** "'03 was a bit of a learning year for me and '04, '05 and '06 were great years. Winning three titles in three years is credit to everyone in the team. '06 and '07 were difficult seasons because I was up against Ahola, Merriman and Aubert. There was a lot of competition to be in the top four. I didn't win in '07 but I did in '06 so I'm pleased about that. Winning in '08 was something I'm proud of because it was a hard year. I almost cut off the end of one of my fingers which made riding really difficult but I still won the E3 championship."

**DBR: Are there any obvious highlights to your career?**

**SA:** "It's difficult to say what the one highlight of my career is. I've enjoyed every year. The years in which I won world championships were all very special. But there are two that really stand out – '02 and '08. '02 was the year I won my first title, which is special for all riders. But in '08 I had a knee operation before the season, then I injured my finger badly and then my knee again. But I still managed to win the title. At the end of the season I was mentally finished. That was a really tough year. Mentally enduro riders are tough, there's not much they can't deal with. But I was finished."

**DBR: What has been the lowest point?**

**SA:** "I could say the seasons that I didn't win the titles. But even those years I learned a lot and generally enjoyed myself. They were learning years. School years I guess you could say. The years that made me realise I needed to be better – faster, stronger, more focused – if I was going to win the next season."

**DBR: Like many riders you came into enduro from motocross. Did you find it difficult during your first years as an enduro racer?**

**SA:** "Every rider has to start somewhere. In the '90s, when I was still racing motocross, I was away from Finland for four-and-a-half months at times. So racing outside of Scandinavia wasn't a problem for me. Basically, I'd spent all my money, my father spent all of his, so I couldn't race GP motocross anymore. That's when I started thinking about racing in some enduro competitions. I had some friends competing in the WEC and I could beat them in Finland. When I didn't have the option to race in motocross I started doing enduros, firstly in Finland and then internationally. I learned a lot during those years. I started at the bottom and worked my way up."

**DBR: Is there anything you'll miss about the WEC?**

**SA:** "Nothing at the moment. But this winter will be a strange one for me. Knowing that for the first time in 10 years I won't need to start preparing for the new season, well, I'm not sure what I'll do."

**DBR: And how do you think you'll be remembered?**

**SA:** "I just hope that people have good memories of me as a person and as a rider. I know I have some great memories from my time in the WEC. I have always given my best but have always tried to enjoy myself and have fun doing what I'm doing."







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## MX1 — RYAN DUNGEY

I know what you're thinking – Ryan Dungey isn't a 450cc rider. That much is true, for the most part. It's a bit of a long story to find out how Dungey came to be the MX1 rider for Team USA this year but the short version is that Dungey has the desire and credentials to be the MX1 representative.

Now for the long story! The obvious #1 choice for the MX1 spot – despite his sitting out the AMA Nationals this year on his SX-only contract with L&M Racing Yamaha – is James Stewart. He has been to the Motocross des Nations twice (both in England) and his speed is unquestionable. However, the rumour is that he was offered the position of Team Captain on the team this year but he turned it down, citing his time off the bike during his 'break' and his desire to be well-prepared for any race, much less one like the Motocross des Nations.

Obviously, Ricky Carmichael is mostly retired and definitely retired from racing but surely there were better options than bringing up Dungey from the 250cc class in the USA to race a 450cc in Italy? Maybe...

But 2005 MXdN veteran Kevin Windham was also sitting out the nationals this year, yet again. So what about last year's Team USA hero who came from behind in the final moto to pass enough people to secure the win for the USA after Stewart crashed? Timmy Ferry's been nursing an injured heel all year long and he still wasn't near 100 per cent by the end of the Nationals.

Multi-time Team USA uber-hero Ryan Villopoto obviously would've been a shoo-in in the 450cc class, except that he blew out his knee early in the Nationals after winning the opening round at Glen Helen going away. He still hasn't even started riding yet.

Dungey's team-mate Mike Alessi has a similar story, blowing up his kneecap after three rounds in the Nationals. With Villopoto out Alessi would've been a shoo-in as well. And he still may have been the guy for Team USA if he would have let his knee heal before he returned to try to race at Colorado. The resulting re-injury of his kneecap extended his recovery time considerably. He could've been back with five rounds left to run in the Nationals had he heeded the doctor's advice and stayed off his knee but his impatience cost him not just the championship – which was gone either way – but his chance at representing Team USA this year.

Then there was obviously Josh Grant. Grant showed amazing speed all year, even if his consistency was lacking a bit. Still, he brought down an AMA National win at Red Bud and he was up front constantly. He's a natural and he gets good starts. However, a bike failure at the X Games left him with two badly injured ankles so he was out as well.

Even with him out, the only riders who beat Grant in points – despite not racing the final four Nationals of the year (with the exception of moto one at Budds Creek which was more of a test of his condition than a race) – were Tommy Hahn (winner of the finale at Steel City but otherwise pretty inconsistent), Michael Byrne (Australian), Ivan Tedesco, Andrew Short (sickness keeping him from the top of his form) and Chad Reed (Australian).

Knowing all of that, the decision to move Dungey up to the 450cc class from the 250cc class starts to make a whole lot more sense. After all, the 250cc class is very deep in the USA, partly because more riders were healthy at the end of the series. Dungey has raced a 450cc a couple of times before in the USA – both in SX – and he even grabbed a podium last year on the machine.

Dungey would've definitely been the Team USA pick in the MX2 class either way but, obviously, the only reason he's the MX1 pick is because Stewart, Villopoto, Alessi and Grant were all unavailable and others were either too sick or too injured to give it a run.







# P I C K N'MIX!

THE MXdN MIGHT HAVE BEEN AND GONE BUT WHAT ABOUT THE REASONING BEHIND THE THREE-MAN TEAM CHOSEN TO RACE FOR UNCLE SAM?

**T**eam USA have been plainly dominant at the Motocross des Nations almost since 1981, the year of the team's first win in the event. Since then Team USA have only lost a handful of times and the USA took over the overall win record in a very short period of time.

When the team returned to the MXdN in 2003 after a few years off due to fear of terrorism and other such things following 9/11 it wasn't easy and they were beaten in Zolder. After another year out Team USA were then victorious in 2005 at Ernee. Since then the team have tacked on three more wins – in England twice and at Budds Creek in the USA – but it somehow seems that enthusiasm for the event on my side of the pond has died off a bit.

Just don't tell this year's team that because if they have anything they have enthusiasm...

Racer X's editors at large. He knows the sport and its personalities like few others and as our US Editor provides insight straight from the Stateside scene...

Steve Cox is an American moto-journalist who follows the entire AMA SX/MX tour. Since moving on from US weekly Cycle News he's struck out on his own to do the freelance thing and recently became one of

STATESIDE





## MX2 — JAKE WEIMER

All of this brings us to Jake Weimer. Weimer is a feel-good story in the USA. He came from very humble beginnings, living in a trailer with his dad just to make sure they had enough money to go racing when he was an amateur. As a professional he has slowly and methodically worked his way to the front of the pack in the 250cc class.

In his first year – in 2006 – he rarely broke the top five. But in 2007 he grabbed his first podium. In 2008 he grabbed his first supercross win as well as his first podiums outdoors. Then in 2009 he broke out.

Having joined the Monster Energy/Pro Circuit Kawasaki squad for 2009, Weimer went out and won three AMA SX rounds, nearly taking down title favourite Dungey for the Lites West crown. He then went out and won three AMA Nationals – his first three ever – at a time when Dungey and Christophe Pourcel seemed to be dominating everything. Since Pourcel is French and the only other rider who beat him in points besides Dungey is Australian (Brett Metcalfe), Weimer was the obvious choice.

It's quite a ways to go for a rider – from unknown hopeful in 2006 to MXdN racer in 2009 – but that's the kind of guy Weimer is. He's a hard worker and he's very headstrong. Plus he's got some of the best equipment in the MX2 class. Watch out for Jake Weimer on his international debut.



## MX3 — IVAN TEDESCO

And then there's Ivan Tedesco. If you remember, he was part of the winning Motocross des Nations team in 2005 at Ernee on his KX250F. Then, despite missing all but one National in 2006 – his first year in the 450cc class – Tedesco was asked to fill in for the recently injured Ricky Carmichael at Matterley Basin.

The result was that Tedesco stepped up to the plate and made it happen when he needed to. Despite not being nearly in race shape he led most of the MX2/MX3 moto before fading with horrific arm-pump. Still, his performance was the one that kept Team USA on a winning streak. His strong finish in the first MX3 event was enough to allow him to drop his second moto result and that combined with team-mates Ryan Villopoto and James Stewart's performances in their respective classes gave the USA the win.

In short, Tedesco is a clutch player (a baseball term for a man who can soak up pressure) and he's being asked to come through again in Italy. Tedesco actually won a National this summer at Lakewood – the site of next year's MXdN – and he plans to be the relay anchor in Italy. And depending on the health and luck of his team-mates it may once again come down to a clutch performance by the MX3 rider to sort out who wins the event.





Team USA had perfected the 'M' but were still working on the 'Y', the 'C' and the 'A'...



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Justin Brayton takes a gate-to-flag win second time out at Steel City





# F I N A L FLING!

DUNGEY OVERCOMES POURCEL AND JOINS REED IN THE AMA  
RECORD BOOKS AS SUZUKI TOP THE 250 AND 450cc CLASSES...

AMA NATS WRAP



## FINAL STANDINGS

### 450cc

1	Chad Reed	481 points
2	Andrew Short	388
3	Ivan Tedesco	376
4	Michael Byrne	348
5	Tommy Hahn	302
6	Josh Grant	280
7	Justin Brayton	249
8	Nick Wey	200
9	Cody Cooper	191
10	James Albertson	185
28	Adam Chatfield	43

### 250cc

1	Ryan Dungey	503 points
2	Christophe Pourcel	492
3	Brett Metcalfe	378
4	Jake Weimer	353
5	Justin Barcia	340
6	Tommy Searle	332
7	Broc Tickle	285
8	Blake Wharton	273
9	Tyla Ratray	236
10	Matt Lemoine	189
14	Steven Clarke	126
18	Max Anstie	107

Justin Barcia ends the season fifth in the 250cc class after an impressive rookie season

The 2009 Lucas Oil AMA Pro Motocross Championships head into the final round with one championship decided and another still up for grabs. However, a lot of damage is done at the penultimate round when 250cc championship leader – and series dominator – Christophe Pourcel has an engine let go in the first moto followed by a first-turn mishap in the second.

So Ryan Dungey inherits a commanding points lead going into the series finale but with so much on the line no-one knows what to expect.

In the first 250cc Steel City moto, Monster Energy/Pro Circuit Kawasaki's Pourcel takes over the lead early on but is quickly joined by Rockstar/Makita Suzuki's Dungey. Their pace is so much higher than the rest of the field – including Justin Barcia in third place – that they continue to pull away from Barcia despite Pourcel obviously playing games with Dungey.

Throughout most of the race, once Dungey is in second, Pourcel continues to slow down and give Dungey opportunities to pass him but Dungey never fully takes the bait, knowing that Pourcel's either trying to force a mistake or something much more sinister.

Dungey pulls alongside and even into the lead a couple of times but then thinks better of it when Pourcel comes racing back up behind him or next to him and he gladly hands the lead back to the Frenchman. Pourcel ends up taking the moto win but Dungey is right on his tail which leaves Dungey with a 14-point lead going into the second moto. A 10th place finish or better will clinch the title for Dungey.

"He just refused to go past me," Pourcel says. "It was like two or three races ago when I won both motos easy [at Unadilla]. I know when I have my speed nobody can follow me. That time it was kind of the same. He was pretty fast today but he couldn't have ridden with me if I didn't want him to. I could've ridden out there by myself and won the moto and it would've been easy and he wouldn't have passed me but I tried to have some fun.

"I didn't want to push him off the track or anything – that wasn't my goal because I'm not going to win the championship like that – but I did try to play a game with him.

But he didn't really want to play. So I'm like 'hey, you can pass me and I'm going to ride behind you' because we haven't gotten a chance to race like that this year but I think he was scared."

In moto two, sick of the games and knowing exactly where Dungey stands on the prospect of racing it out with him, Pourcel grabs the holeshot and puts on a clinic. No-one comes close to him and Pourcel takes an easy win – his 13th moto win of the year out of 24 run – and the overall. However, Dungey comes home in second for the championship with a win total of seven motos and an equal four overall wins along with Pourcel. It's Dungey's first-ever AMA Nationals title.

"It definitely feels good to get the first one," Dungey says. "I've been working hard my whole life for this point and I'm thankful that today went good. It's hard to put into words how I feel because it was a long season with a lot of ups and downs but I never gave up so, in the end, it just means that much more to wrap it up.

"I want to keep moving forward and hopefully rack up one after another but it was good to be able to get a supercross championship and then carry the momentum into the outdoors and wrap this one up too. I'm moving up next year so I really wanted to get it before I moved out of the class and this one's even more special than the supercross one because it's 12 rounds and 24 motos of fighting. It was non-stop during the weeks and on the weekends. It was tough, for sure."

Pourcel has a decidedly less-enthusiastic take on the championship and with good reason from his perspective. "That was some f\*\*\*ing bad luck," he says. "That's the word... I just had bad luck and in my mind I just felt like something out there didn't want me to win this championship."

Despite being the obvious pick for the Motocross des Nations team for France, Pourcel is sitting out the event to get his collarbone worked on and his stomach ailment fixed. "They should find something wrong and I'm pretty excited about that," Pourcel says of his stomach. "I'm actually excited to go to the hospital because this stomach pain hurts so bad! I've got to fix that s\*\*\*! I'm never excited to go to the



hospital but right now I'm happy because it hurts every single day."

It's clear right away at Steel City that something is amiss with 2009 450cc champion Chad Reed of the Rockstar/Makita Suzuki team. Despite running the #1 plate for the first time outdoors in his entire career – in the USA or otherwise – Reed isn't himself at Steel City.

After dominating moto one at Southwick, Reed went down in a heap while dominating moto two at the event and knocked himself silly. He had thought of sitting out the finale but with his contract negotiations still up in the air for 2010 Reed was unsure that he would even race in 2010 so he wanted to take advantage of the opportunity and race the last round with the #1 plate.

However, it doesn't take long for Reed to turn back into his old self. In moto one, despite a horrible start, Reed ends up a contender by the end of the moto. Out front – and sick with a stomach ailment of his own – Honda Red Bull Racing's Andrew Short has the early lead only to lose it, then gain it back, then lose it again in a battle with team-mate Ivan Tedesco and Canidae/Motosport Kawasaki's Tommy Hahn. It takes a few laps and a few passes but eventually Hahn establishes himself as the guy to beat in the moto and begins to put time on Short, Tedesco, Michael Byrne and the rest of the field.

Heading into the late laps, despite his stomach bothering him

horribly, Reed begins to pick off riders near the front of the pack and showing true grit he passes team-mate Byrne for second on the final lap of the moto. But Hahn is too far gone and takes his first ever moto win over Reed, Byrne, Tedesco, Short and the rest of the field.

In the second moto Jagermeister KTM's Justin Brayton takes the holeshot over Monster Energy Kawasaki replacement rider Jake Moss and Moss holds tough in second as Brayton pulls away to his first ever 450cc moto win. Moss finishes second over Tedesco, Hahn and Short.

As for Reed, his stomach problem is finally too much for him and he pulls in. It's the first moto in his career that he's quit without a major mechanical malfunction or injury.

With his fourth-place finish in the second moto and the inconsistency of his rivals, Hahn takes his first-ever AMA National win. "It's cool," Hahn says. "It's something I've been working for ever since I was a little kid and it's something that my whole family's been working for. I couldn't have done it without them. I'm enjoying it right now and I'm glad I went out at the last race of the season with a good result. I just want to put myself in a good position to get a good ride next year and I think I did that."

Next up from the USA is the US Open of Supercross. Look out for coverage in the next issue of DBR.



He's not as fast as Christophe Pourcel at Steel City but Ryan Dungey does enough to lift the 250cc National title



## MENDED MAX!

AFTER LAST MONTH'S BUSTED BONE  
OUR STATES-BASED STAR IS BACK ON  
A BIKE...JUST!

**A**s you all know I broke my ankle no more than a month ago so to be honest this month has been a little boring. I have made a speedy recovery though and have literally today just started riding again. I had a good team of doctors working with me to get me back to 100 per cent so now I guess I can really start training again.

With all of the amateur kids (on my dad's team) gone back home for a month all I've been doing is working on my psychology training and sorting my deal out for next year. I also have a little sister now called Zoey and she's keeping me busy.

I'm looking forward to being able to start my supercross training in a week or so and really get back in the swing of things. Sorry this month was so boring but I'm sure with all my testing and with the guys coming back to stay at the house again next month's will be a lot better.

I don't break very often so you won't have many boring months out of my column writing career – as long as I don't get many more 450s on my head! I'm going to be back 100 per cent and more ready than ever for A1.

Talk to you soon...

Max





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James Stewart in action at Mallory in '08 – there's no doubt that Team USA are a big draw but does the MXdN need the Yanks to stay credible?

# N O S H O W WITHOUT PUNCH!

THE MXdN IS WORTHLESS WITHOUT TEAM USA RECKONS OUR INDUSTRY INSIDER – BUT WHAT WOULD HE KNOW? HE'S FROM CANADA...

Words by STEVE MATTHES Photo by SUTTY

**A**t the time of writing this column, countries from around the world are gearing up to travel to Italy for the 63rd running of the Motocross des Nations. I know, I know – they changed the name to 'of' from the long-running 'des' but I don't care. I'm running the 'des' in everything that I print or say because that's one tradition (unlike two-strokes and foam chest protectors) that I'm going to hang on to.

The race has always attracted much attention and rightfully so, it was and might remain the biggest race in the world. I'm not so sure on the biggest race in the world title anymore but one could make an argument either way I suppose. I feel like I have a unique perspective of this race for a few different reasons. One is that I'm a geek and have always followed the MXdN heavily, two is that I'm not American and therefore do not get my back up if someone has the gall to suggest that America not go or that America will get beat. I really don't care who wins the race – seriously I don't.

I wanted America to win the last few years but that was just because my good friend Tim Ferry was on the team and I wanted him to do well. My country is Canada and they almost always suck balls (can I use suck balls in a story?)! They struggle for a multitude of reasons – that's another column for another day – and my point is I just really want to see a good race. And the last reason I have a good idea about the ins and outs of this race is that I got lucky enough to represent the United States as a mechanic to Ferry in Zolder in 2003.

That race didn't go so well for America but it's nice to think back and reflect on how lucky I was to be on the team with Ryan Hughes, Ricky Carmichael and their mechanics. The paparazzi following us around was just insane and when we were in staging I was seriously blinded from the flashes of the cameras as they all took photos of RC.

My point is that right around the turn of the century the race started to become harder and harder to go to. It was an expensive undertaking for the teams to go over there and do it right. When we went in 2003 it was a skeleton crew and not really a true team. RC and the Honda guys were pitted out of a big rental van, Hughes was in the factory KTM pits in another garage and there I was, just a bike and two helpers surrounded by fans trying to steal

stuff. The team manager wasn't around very much to help out and Ferry's father-in-law had to stay back in the garage and make sure things weren't stolen. It wasn't a great atmosphere to be honest and I think team morale suffered a bit.

So America didn't send a team that next year. It was just very expensive (I believe that Yamaha laid out about 8K out of their pockets to go the previous year), the AMA didn't have the funds, the USA lost the last one and the interest was at an all-time low.

Fast forward to last year in England. America came off a dominating race on their own soil and I show up in England to hang out with Ferry once again. Only I can't see him. I don't have a special wristband to get into the American 'compound'. Compound? Huh? In three short years we go from having a father-in-law staying back to keep gear from being stolen to being fenced in? Wow, anyways it seemed that you couldn't swing a cat and not hit someone in a Team USA jacket. I've been in this industry a long time and I probably had no clue who 25 per cent of the people inside the USA compound were. Of course, once I secured a pass that is.

The enthusiasm for the team was incredible, a complete 180 degree turn from 2003. I know because I was there that cold, dreary day in Belgium. Now we're in 2009 and apathy for the team seems to be coming back in. With the declining bike sales, lack of aftermarket sales and the reduction of race team budgets, there were many questions as to whether the team would even go. The riders and managers were worried about if they would have a job for 2010, not the MXdN.

The last couple of years Monster Energy stepped up for the team and before that MX Sports were a big backer. For this year there's no sponsor there to write a cheque and that lack of funding was really a big reason why the team almost – and I mean almost – didn't go over to defend the Peter Chamberlain Trophy. At the risk of getting strung up in the centre of the town, I would totally understand if the team didn't go. Think about this? Why would anyone open up the coffers for Team USA? It's all about return on investment for a big company to write a big cheque and what exactly is the ROI on the MXdN sponsorship?

The race is not televised in America, there is nothing over here for the team to hang its hat on.

There is no visit to the White House or USA Today stories on the winning team. You could make a great case that winning the St Louis Supercross is of greater importance to the sponsors. Winning any SX really. That's not a perception or an opinion. That is fact. The race just isn't covered outside of the traditional sources. It may mean a great deal of pride for the country but it's a win-only deal. Who remembers who got second the last few years?

I've been to the MXdN four times now and I can confidently state that everyone there wants to see the Americans. If they are not rooting for them, they are rooting against them. When America does not show at the MXdN the event loses some lustre. That is the fact when you are the winning country in 19 of the last 25 years that you sent a team. I believe that if it wasn't for team manager Roger De Coster's passion for the event we wouldn't have gone.

Think about how the team almost didn't go this year, think about the business model that Youthstream has set up for the GPs and MXdN. They aren't losing any money on the races – that's for sure – and I can't help but think that with no return on investment for any sponsors of the American team what's the incentive for them to go. Pride and glory can only take you so far y'know?

Perhaps YS should think about making it worthwhile for the American teams to make it over – they know that there is no real show without Team America. They need the USA team there to validate the MXdN no matter how they would spin an absence. I know, I've been on the inside and seen it with my own eyes. A MXdN without Team USA isn't a MXdN that holds a lot of weight.

I know for a fact that YS were willing to pay James Stewart to come over and race a GP – they wouldn't pay him what he wanted but they are obviously willing to spend money to get promotion. They're relying on that gut feeling everyone involved with Team USA has telling them to do the right thing. With no purse money, no travel stipends and nobody remembering anything but a win I'd say that Team USA are the real suckers here. Sometimes the right thing isn't the smart thing.

Do you hear that sound? That's Youthstream laughing all the way to the bank while Uncle Sam holds his pockets out wondering what just happened...





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# MENTAL MOVIES!

THE MAIN LANGUAGE OF OUR UNCONSCIOUS MIND IS IMAGE-BASED SO IF WE WANT TO SUCCEED WE NEED TO TUNE OUT THE NEGATIVE NASTIES AND GET POSITIVE...

Words by Neil Drew

In previous articles I've mentioned the images we get in our minds and I've also touched upon the fact that we have an unconscious and a conscious part to our minds. So for this article I want to bring all of that together and teach you the art of visualisation, what it is and how it works.

There are some facts that very few are aware of about how the mind works. An extremely important understanding to have is that it's estimated that the conscious brain is only capable of processing about 134 pieces of information per second yet the unconscious part of our brain is capable of processing about four billion pieces of information per second. I don't know how they worked that out but those are the estimated figures which to date haven't been disputed or disproved.

There is constant communication between the conscious and the unconscious parts of our minds but they almost work in separate ways – the conscious part working with language, processing and logical thinking, the unconscious part of the mind working with images and emotions, reactions and responses. The main language of the unconscious is that of images – these are the still pictures and the movies that we run in our minds.

The unconscious part of our mind responds to both the conscious spoken word, the images that we consciously create and also the instructions of others. For example if I said think of a snowman with a big scarf, black beady eyes, a green hat and a big orange carrot for a nose you'll now have an image of that or at the very least you'll have imagined the elements as you read them. If I now said imagine being at home and going through the process of making a cup of tea or coffee – filling the kettle up, getting a cup from the cupboard, milk from the fridge and so on – you'll have created a movie in your mind of the process. You might even get the sounds, smells or tastes associated with it. Just sit for a moment, close your eyes and run that movie in your mind and you will see what I mean.

These images are the instruction manual that the unconscious part of our minds uses to decide what to do. For a moment consider a part of your riding you find yourself saying "I always get wrong". You'll most likely have just had an image or movie of yourself doing exactly that. Bizarre but that's the way the mind works. Now what is even more bizarre is that every time you think those negative things the unconscious part of your mind runs that same movie. And because you have that movie you have just instructed your mind to do the very thing that you kept getting wrong. Think about when you walk a track and look at the different elements and say to yourself "I always get this bit wrong" or even something like "I'm not very good at that". You'll

recall an image of the failure and this forms an internal sabotage because it actually acts as a direct instruction to the mind to replicate that exact same imagined scenario.

Most people before the start of a competition worry about what could happen, especially in motocross where there's a whole bunch of riders battling for the first corner. This fear and concern causes negative images or negative movies and the unconscious part of the brain which is the seat of emotion gives the person the negative emotions to match the image or movie just run in the mind.

Now we have covered all of the negative effects of allowing the mind to run riot it's time to look at how you can control it – and this is the real simple bit, all you do is close your eyes and imagine how you want to do it. Imagine it at race pace with as many of the feelings and sounds, gear shifts and braking points as possible. Imagine you are actually on your bike doing these things and this in turn acts as the programme that you want your mind to execute for you. When you imagine a perfect lap you are programming your mind in advance so it is more familiar with the details and knows what you want.

If someone threw you a tennis ball you would without conscious thought move your hands automatically to catch it. True, you've been catching things since early childhood but the point I'm making here is that the reaction is done without conscious thought. It is done unconsciously based on an existing programme in the unconscious part of your mind. And if we can make these programmes successful we have a much higher chance of a successful outcome. The more you visualise the action in as much detail as possible then the more you are likely to achieve a positive outcome. This in turn will replace negative feelings with the calm concentration required to perform at your best.

The best way to learn this is to go to a practice track and before you even get on your bike decide what you're going to work on, look at the relevant part of the track, then decide what you want to happen. Sit quietly and visualise doing it exactly as you want the outcome to be. Repeat the visualisation three times - exactly the same movie – then jump on your bike, relax, avoid consciously thinking about that part and just ride and see what happens. You might surprise yourself how easily you turn a negative aspect into a positive.

Obviously, common sense is called for. If you've only just mastered small tabletops don't start visualising hitting huge doubles tapped out in top. When the brain hasn't any references for doing long jumps and big take-offs it could very well go into self-preservation mode and freeze - landing you in a whole heap of trouble. So use this stuff sensibly. |



## DREWWHO?

COMPETITION MIND COACH

Neil Drew is a former MX and enduro racer and a qualified sports mind coach. At present he is coaching two national champions and several GP competitors and has helped many amateur and professional athletes from all over the world. He can be contacted via DBR or by email at [neil@competitionmind.co.uk](mailto:neil@competitionmind.co.uk)





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# YAM SLAM!

WAKKER SAVES THE WR250F FROM ANOTHER MONTH OF SITTING STATIONARY IN THE DBR STOCKROOM AND SHOWS THE LITTLE RIPPER A LITTLE LOVE...

Words and photos by **Mr Godfrey Walker**

**T**he Man of No Law has been suffering from a severe lack of saddletime on the WR250F lately so seeing as my long-term KTM test bike has been returned to Austria it's time to rip up to HQ and release the little Bobby Dazzler from his steely grip. On my arrival it looks like the WRF needs a bit of a freshen up and as the editorial office is overflowing with trickness just waiting to be bolted on to her I decide to get this bike ready for some serious off-road riding.

I rush back to my workshop where I stick the kettle on and break open a packet of Rich Teas, then sit back and look at it for a while to work out what simple processes I can do to change the bike into more of a racer without destroying its essence and making life too technically difficult for the average owner. My plan is to strip off the lights and turn the slightly weighty looking WR into a sleek GNCC style racer, a bike which will be able to handle every style of closed course riding and racing but with only a simple amount of work needed to go back to a fully road legal spec.

Before starting any work though I want to get a real feel for riding it first so after having another cup of coffee and some more biscuits I give G-Man a call at Three Cross Demolition to see if myself and the Mayor of Neva Rite could pop down to the EX track and turn some laps on the WR and also an EXC two-fiddy that will also be modified over the next couple of months. And after riding the WR for the day in the company of The Mayor, G Man and Stoney Wayne – then discussing the strong and not so strong points – I know exactly which direction to go to make this little user-friendly lump a much more dynamic vehicle.

As with most technical jobs the first thing to do is put the kettle on, break open the biscuits and then get the bike clean. The washing process of any bike is standard – don't aim the washer too close on full power at parts like the carburettor, throttle housing, seat or airbox. Get some good detergent and spend some time brushing the plastics etc and scrubbing the frame to bring it all up nice and twinkly sparkly.

With the bike secured on the stand in the workshop a little compressor air takes care of drying the bike.

With the crew in the office already having sourced some quality parts I make one final phone call to Chris Porter at Mojo Suspension to hook us up with a Fox Racing Shox Podium RC3 shock to get some high-powered quality handling and adjustment control brought to the game. The shock slips into place at Mojo HQ with a quick manoeuvre of the subframe and the scene is set to make the cross-country WRF a reality. Chris and his crew test springs to get the perfect set-up for the bike and the riders of large frame who would be riding it...

With spirits high after the trip to Mojo the rest of the job is going to be smooth. The stock forks are set up super-soft for anything but the smoothest terrain so I rip them to bits and proceed to make a slightly harder setting to match the Fox Shox shock. Oil level and viscosity maxxed out – 90mm air gap and 10wt Elf fork oil – as well as beefed up internal compression valving.

With the suspension sorted it's on to the removal of the lights. Japanese trail bikes are made with a high level of quality when it comes to lighting set-ups. The set-up on the WR is pretty easy to deal with as it involves whipping off the front light and taking the wiring loom plug holding bracket off. This frees the wiring up to be moved around and taped up nice and neat like.

My idea is to keep things simple and allow easy replacement of the lights and with this set-up it's simple – putting the front light on will only take minutes. The clock is another story though and I have to make a simple holder for it as the digital display will be really useful for cross-country racing and moto timing. I want the clock to retain some flexibility so it won't shake itself to bits and decide to mount it using two strips of 1.5mm thick carbon fibre. The carbon fibre is drilled at both ends and mounted to the handlebar top clamp and lower fixings on the clock. Simple and easy – just like me!

The Cycra front plate fits into place with the lower holding tabs and I simply use zip >>

**Fox Racing Shox  
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*Lawless races off to his local dogging hot spot while he's still got a headlight*



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ties to the original headlight fixing bracket, leaving room for the wires etc. The plate sits at a bit of an odd angle but I don't want to remove the brackets at this stage. Low density foam takes care of protection of the clock. Rear light removal is simply a case of unscrewing and disconnecting the plug.

The weight is really starting to come off the bike and so it's time to wave the Renthal wand over the blue machine. I bolt Windham bend Twinwalls into place, glue the grips on and fit an o-ring chain and Twinring rear sprocket along with a new front cog of course so the gearing is of the 13/50 variety.

The throttle housing rubber cover can sometimes rub on the throttle grip and make it feel heavy so it is a good plan to trim the cover back with scissors – this way you retain the protection and alleviate the rubbing problem.

No Toil had sent a Super-Flo filter kit for test. The cage has no backfire screen and the pre-oiled filter is ready to rock and roll allowing fresh, power-increasing air flow into the mix.

Cycra Powerflow plastics are bolted into place wherever possible on the WR. These units are strong and the rad scoops help draw extra lovely cooling air into the radiators. This is a big help as the Yamaha hard parts radiator protectors are bolted on to keep the coolers straight and operational at all times and in all conditions.

So there it is, all set and ready to rip.

A quick coffee and biccie stop and then I'm off to get kitted up and take it for a shakedown...



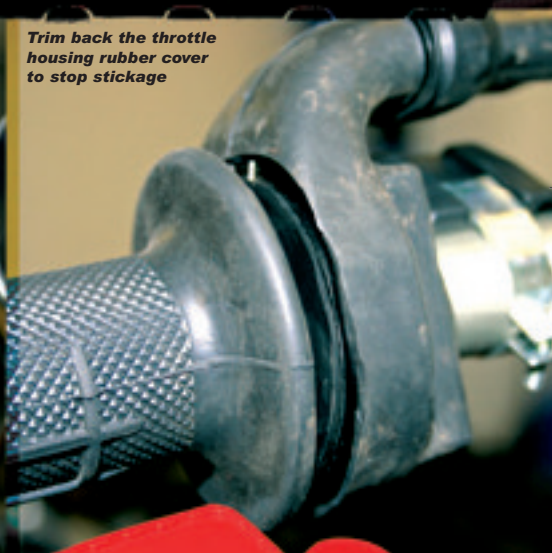
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*For many fans the thrill of seeing DT lap Farleigh on his '89 world title winning 500cc Honda is the highlight of the weekend*





© Mark Turner

Bikes in bits are a common sight at the Vets MXdN Nations Cup

# CASTLE COMEBACK!

## *Dickie's Tales*

IT'S BEEN FOUR YEARS SINCE DICKIE DYE – A REGULAR DBR CONTRIBUTOR IN THE LATE '80S – LAST ROLLED UP BEHIND A STARTGATE AND WHERE BETTER TO MAKE HIS COMEBACK THAN THE VETS MXdN NATIONS CUP AT FARLEIGH CASTLE?

Words by Dickie Dye Photos by Nick Haskell

**T**here's no doubt, I was press-ganged into the whole affair! After prolonged pressure from friends and acquaintances (most of whom were involved in the organisation of the event) and exhaustive negotiations for start money, in early March I finally succumbed and dropped an envelope containing my entry and a cheque for one hundred hard earned quid into the post box.

The racer in me smiled and nodded confidently, excited at the prospect of being in the mix once again. The gate drops, shoulders barging into the first turn, 20 minutes of pure adrenalin surging through my body as I take the chequered flag for a start-to-finish victory, both arms held aloft in front of thousands of adoring fans now storming the track to lift me off my bike. The dad in me shook his head and whispered "you prat!"

Still, too late now, eh! Six months to get myself back into the motocross groove. No problem. Six whole months!

First job, find myself a bike. Actually two bikes as, in a moment of madness, I (the racer in me) entered two classes. The over 250cc Evolution races and of course the Veteran Modern races. How hard can it be? How fast can a bunch of old codgers go? Do they know who I was? I was up for it and ready... Well, almost!

The simple reason for the decision to enter two classes was based firmly on the promise of a free bike for each. My mate Malc offered me his 1987 CR500 and DT said these very words – and I quote – "no problem Dickie, I'll sort you something out at CCM". I should have taped them both.

In Malc's defence – unlike Dave who said after I'd entered he didn't have enough bikes for him to use, let alone me – he did actually have the bike he promised, though there was a story... It was in a million bits in his evo/twinshock motorcycle graveyard of a garage and needed more fabricating than assembling. A bracket making for the frame and an exhaust sculpting from scratch and the electrics sorting out. Oh and I'd

have to find a tank and he wasn't too sure about the gearbox and don't even start me on suspension and wheels and tyres! Needless to say, before the six months were up my plans would all change.

My fitness schedule began as planned in March, then kind of fizzled out after a few days when my son Jet decided he was going to stay awake most of the night and my wife Annie decided she (conveniently) wasn't going to hear any of it. How does she manage to hear a teaspoon drop in the kitchen while she's in the bath and not hear screams louder than a 450 with no silencer on full chat in the next room? Either way, getting up at 6am for a run isn't so attractive after only two hours sleep. Hey-ho...

It was the beginning of May when I actually scribbled down on paper a positive, intensive riding schedule due to start on July 1. Two days a week riding and three days per week fitness. I'd re-joined the gym and checked out all my local practice tracks. Yep, that should do it! Dickie Dye the racer smiled determinedly. Richard the dad muttered under his breath "you prat!"

June came surprisingly quickly. Where was this year vanishing to? Pressure of work, Jet now six months old and growing out of clothes weekly, shopping to do, jobs around the house as requested by Annie (who still slept solidly all night...bless!) and still no bike in the garage!

Thank goodness for eBay! There it was – an '89 250cc Yamaha. That's the kiddy. I loved that model. It was immaculate, like new. Better than new! Renthal bars, new Pirellis on Talon wheels, O-ring chain, new sprockets, completely rebuilt motor, powder-coated frame, new plastics, DEP pipe, Ohlins rear shock, factory-prepped Kayabas... Oh sweet mercy – that was my bike! I wanted it, no – more than wanted it – I needed this very bike to win this race like I need water to survive. I have pictures of me riding this bike on my wall (October '88 DBR, honest, check it out). This was fate! I was trembling with excitement and it was only £305! I shouted for Annie to come and look. She was right in the middle of feeding Jet but >>



I shouted and shouted down the stairs until she finally left my son crying in his chair reaching for his half-finished bowl of banana and apple yoghurt.

"Look Annie, look at this bike! This is the one and look at the price!" She flicked the keyboard with one fluent movement. "Rich, it's only been put up for sale for two hours, that's the reserve price and it's on for 10 days!" She returned to Jet now screeching so loudly he had turned purple and had managed somehow to reach his bowl on the table and flick half over the kitchen wall and the other half over Mangothemutthead who was lying next to the table.

I gazed undaunted at my bike and slipped in a bid for £325 (I would go to £350 if I really had to). That should do it. The bike was as good as mine. I clicked on one of the pictures and set it as my screen saver. Now for a modern 450...

I haven't really done much trading on eBay but it all looked so simple, there were so many bikes to choose from – KTM, Suzuki, Kawasaki and Honda, whatever I wanted. I was attracted, I must say, to the thought of sitting on the line with a bike with electric start so that narrowed it down a bit! However, in the end I opted for an old faithful 450 Honda with all the bling. Starting price £800. Yep, that'll do me – I'll go up to £950 on this one. So with my 250 YZ in the bag for £350 max I should be able to go racing for a tad under £1500, then sell 'em after and make a nice little profit together with my prize money! Dickie Dye the racer had taken over and Richard the dad could barely be heard. I love it when a plan comes together!

Seven days passed and my plan (which seemed cast iron a week ago) wasn't going as well as hoped. The YZ was up to three grand and rising and the 450 had already sold for £2,685. Another week on and still no bike. The YZ sold for the cost of five litres of fuel under four grand...

July brought better weather. This wasn't the only consolation. Jet was sleeping a little longer and Annie a little lighter. The physical training was going well and my running partner Mangothemutthead was loving the

hours spent on the common – but still no bikes!

Desperate times take desperate measures... I decided to dig into Jet's school fund and up my budget a little (I won't tell Annie, I'll just put the money back out of my winnings – she'll never know). I spotted a 'buy it now' 1989 CR250 for £950 in Bolton. Handy! Have it taken to the CCM factory and picked up by one of the mechanics, then taken back to the workshop in Bracknell, then somehow, someone can drop it down to Exmouth when they're passing! This plan, vague as it may at first appear, worked remarkably well and the whole trip only took a month! Once safely back in my workshop in Devon I was halfway there.

The 450 wasn't that straightforward. I had to drive to Cambridge to pick up a bog standard '03 CRF450 which cost me £1,370. Okay, a little over my original budget but now I had two bikes and was ready to kick some old-motocross-fogey-ass. I'd better get practising.

August was upon me. With Richard the dad nowhere to be found I called DT and asked if I could come over to his house and sort myself out some gear he'd promised me. "I've got soooooo much gear," he said, "just help yourself." This was music to my ears. He had completely redeemed himself. I eagerly made the 25-mile trip hoping for boxes of neatly packaged new race gear. It didn't have to be '09 stuff but at least be matching and new(ish). Just like with the promised factory machine, I'd been 'Thorped'... Bags of mis-matched, odd coloured one-offs. The gear which he did have which I tried on was (I have to say Dave) a little baggy round the waist for my streamlined racer's torso. I suggest a little less of the Sunday roasts and ice cream deserts at Keeper's Cottage, eh Dave!

Practising was carefully planned. Wednesday at Apex was a first for me. Dave was coaching up there so he cracked on and watched, occasionally offering helpful tips like "just relax and enjoy..."

With forearms like Popeye how could I relax? The last time I went to this track it was called Worcester Super Cross Track in nineteen eighty something! A delightful Lee (the track owner) was happy to say hi,

talk about old times, then relieve me of 30 quid and by the end of the day I was at least staying on board the 450, although my arms were still like drums.

By the end of August I was ready for a race and turned up as a late entry at Marshfield and joined the Over 35s for a round of the Remedies Championship. Transponders, timed qualifying for positions on the line – what had happened? I drove home from Marshfield in one piece but I was slow! I mean 15 seconds off the pace and with the next stop Farleigh Castle I pondered on what could I do to gain the very best from myself and my machines? I had watched a documentary on the latest techniques athletes use to prepare. Scientists have found that by drinking 500cc of beetroot juice every day for a week prior to an event performance can be improved by up to 25 per cent. Perfect! In this day and age you'd think you could buy beetroot juice anywhere, wouldn't you? Well it may surprise you to know this is not the case and, just for your information, eight whole raw squashed beetroot equals about 500cc and eating 56 whole raw beetroot in one week takes careful planning in many ways!

I talked to Dave's dad Keith and he told me he had two spare wheels for my CRF which would guarantee me a further 10 seconds off my lap times! Of course, I bought them immediately. Finally, I asked for some track tips from the master. After all, if there's one person who knows his way around Farleigh it is he. "Just relax and enjoy," he told me. Yeah, thanks Dave! I was looking more for specifics like lines or starting gate positions!

Friday night I had a few pre-race nerves. Having purple wee didn't help but overall I felt good and with an hour or so to relax I sat with a pen and paper to jot down what this event had cost me. I kinda wish I hadn't started...

Bikes: £2,320  
Fuel to pick up bike (from Cambridge): £125  
Days loss of wages: £50  
Eight practice sessions including fuel for bike/van/entry/loss of days wages: £1,200

**Graham Noyce leads Jimmy Aird 30 years after winning the world 500cc title**







**A very youthful looking Neil Prince enjoys a successful weekend at Farleigh Castle**

Two spare wheels: £300  
 Entry for Farleigh including fuel for van and bike, fitting a tow bar (which I never used for a caravan which turned out to be a heap of scrap): £570  
 Seven packets of beetroot: £3.43  
 Entry fee: £100  
**Total: £4,668.43**

Johnny T (one of the race organisers) obviously conspired with Mark McGill (one of my competitors) to arrange my races so they fell back-to-back in each block. Hey-ho! Even so, Sunday evening came round far too quickly and it was all over. As I drove home I recalled the highlights of my six-month Farleigh adventure and the valuable lessons I'd learned...

- 1: The starting bid on anything on eBay bears no relationship to the selling price.
- 2: The Apex motocross practice track is without question one of the best I've ever been to. £30? I moaned then but would have paid £40!
- 3: When your mate offers you a bike to race, before you enter make sure it is a whole bike ready assembled, not a Yamondavarna in bits in a garage/graveyard somewhere.
- 4: If Dave Thorpe offers to help you out with the loan of a bike and gear just say no.
- 5: If someone offers you a caravan for the weekend free of charge there will be a catch so do not fit a tow bar to your vehicle before you at least look at it.
- 6: Eating three-and-a-half kilos of fresh beetroot in a week will give you purple wee for a month.
- 7: I'm not sure those wheels I bought gave me a 10 second-a-lap advantage.
- 8: Terry House is fast on a twin-shock bike.
- 9: Riding a motocross bike is the very best feeling in the world.
- 10: It took me a while to work out why would anyone ever want to say they were over 40 when they were only 37? Then it clicked. I guess for some riders the sheer pleasure and experience of racing against Dickie Dye is worth the sacrifice. Neil, if you'd just call me we can go riding together whenever you want – no need to go to such extremes!

**World 250cc champion in 1981, Neil Hudson is another legend in action at the historic circuit**



**Who's the mysterious #99 turning up late for the Veterans Cup race? Step forward Mr Richard Dye!**





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KBC Focus	£47.00
THH TX22	£50.00
Fox V1 Race	£80.00

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Fox V2	from £120.00
Fox V3 inc Bag	from £195.00



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Spy Alloy	from £29.00
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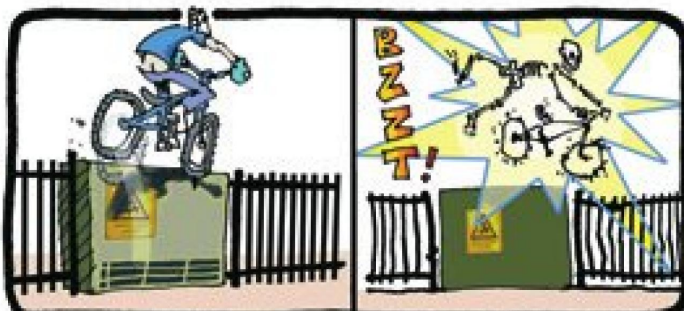




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Words by Sean Lawless





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# FACTORY FINERY!

## Tony's works work-outs...

Nine times out of 10 when we've booked Tony in for a test it's been for a production machine launch but once in a while we've had something a little trickier up our sleeves...

"I've been very fortunate to get to ride some very special factory machines like Jeremy McGrath's Chaparral Yamaha, Ricky Carmichael's Pro Circuit Kawasaki and a few of Mickael Pichon's race bikes. RC's was probably the one I had more of a feel for. We went to the States in 1997 and were in Pittsburgh with Davy Coombs when we got the go-ahead to test it.

"It's probably the one I can relate to most closely because of the size rider he was and having myself spent a big part of my career on Kawasaki. I think they were holding back a bit of information on it because there was a switch on it they wouldn't let us use but even so for a 125 it was still an absolute rocketship.

"I got to ride McGrath's 250 Chaparral Yamaha a couple of years later and with two days notice found myself on a plane to LA. It was a major honour – not many people got to ride Jeremy McGrath's race bike, especially those from outside the US. And it has got to be the closest I've found to an unrideable bike. It wasn't a pile of s\*\*t, it was just unrideable for me as I'm nowhere near as big, nowhere near as fast, nowhere near as aggressive. The whole time I rode it my bum cheeks were twitching and it was just not fun. I ended up breaking my wrist when I dropped it in a small right-hander.

"It was so, so responsive that I struggled to keep the front wheel down. The bike was set up for the power to come in with a bang – the throttle was like an on/off switch. And the suspension was just as hard to get my head around. Riding a bike set up for supercross around Glen Helen was never going to be ideal but the suspension was set hard-as-nails which made it incredibly hard to ride and – to be honest – not a pleasant experience.

"The 250cc Suzuki two-stroke Pichon won a world title on was similar and so was his 450cc Martin Honda four-stroke because those guys ride with their suspension set so hard it's really not fun. The front forks on Pichon's bikes were just ridiculous – the trouble was the faster you went the better feel you got back from the bike but that's when it started to get a little bit frightening.

"A few years back I rode all the KTM factory bikes – two-strokes and four-strokes – but to be honest I've always enjoyed testing stock bikes more because you can make a stock bike work better for you. All the other test riders used to want to adjust the factory bikes to suit their own styles but I never, ever did this because I feel the purpose of testing a factory bike is to ride it as the factory rider has it set up. They're tailored to those guys' styles and should be tested like that.

"People turn around and say 'if I had this bike' or 'if I had that bike' and that's just not true. At the end of the day you've still got to be able to ride them and factory machines only start to work properly when they're ridden real hard. Production bikes are very, very good these days and I don't think you really need to play about with them all that much. Just get your suspension set up before you start spending money on pipes."

put my leg down on landing and basically compressed the femur and tibia and ruptured my ACL and since then I've always had problems with it.

"Then I did the 250F Husky test earlier this year in Tenerife, over-jumped and damaged both my knees again. The meniscus has totally gone from one knee so it's now bone-on-bone. The operation I've just had was to try and sort this – they drilled the top of the tibia to try and create a growth on the bone to give it some cushion. It's still bone-on-bone but instead of wearing the bone it's wearing the callous. It's the same operation as Freddie Flintoff had.

"And if I'm being totally honest I also feel that the magazine needs new blood, someone the younger kids can relate to. I'm just someone they know as a DBR test rider. My pro career ended years ago."

It's been a full nine years since Tony last raced in anything approaching anger which means he was only 25 when he pulled over next to me at Foothills and did the MX equivalent of retiring on his stool. Very young to be calling time on a career that had seen him win British 125cc championship rounds and record a best GP moto finish of ninth but by then he'd already had more than his fair share of injuries...

"When I quit racing professionally a lot of people

said I was making a mistake but there's only so much a body can take and my body had had enough. My best days were through the schoolboys and I spent 10 years with Team Green under the wing of Alec Wright. I won the British championship in every class. But when I went onto 125s at the age of 15 every time I hit the ground I seemed to break something."

Despite the injuries – and sticking with the boxing analogy for the moment – Tony could've been a contender. In fact he was a contender. The final three British championship rounds of '94 saw Tony and his 125cc RWJ Kawasaki run second, third and then first overall as he ended the season on a roll. And then a TV shoot to promote the Weston Beach Race almost ended in tragedy.

Tony and Daniel Smith were supposed to wheelie past each other at high speed but, blinded by a low sun, the pair collided and Tony came off much, much worse. "Things were just starting to come good for me and then I got smashed up at Weston. It was no-one's fault – you've got that great big beach and me and Daniel found each other. The doctors said I'd never race again – I broke both wrists, my foot, my hip, three ribs and had a compound fracture of my femur.

"I came back after six months and in my first British

championship race I had a fourth overall, was training for the next round and rebroke my hip which bent one of the pins so I was basically a whole year off the bike – all the momentum I'd built up at the tail end of '94 was completely lost.

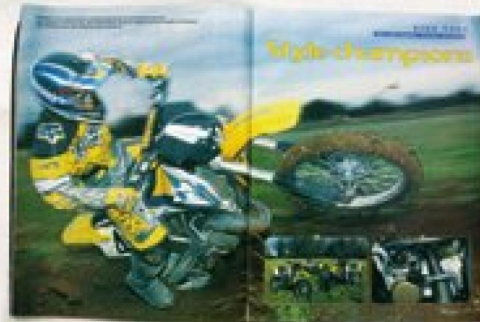
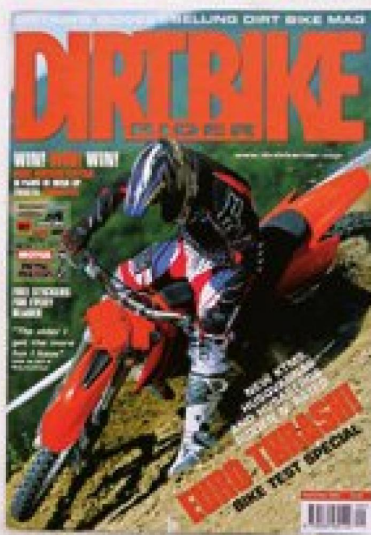
"I have my regrets in different ways – it could have been a different story if I hadn't had all the injuries – but that's life, that's how it goes."

Finding test riders is a tricky business. They don't have to be super-fast factory pilots – in fact, it helps if they're not as every production bike's suspension would be labelled too soft – but they do need to have a solid understanding of how a bike works. It also helps if they come without ties to one particular manufacturer and that, more often than not, is the biggest sticking point. Luckily, back in 1997, things were maybe not quite as rigid...

"The reason I got the job was at the time I was still a respectable British championship rider and I wasn't tied in with a manufacturer directly – although I rode for Yamaha through a shop. But thankfully Yamaha had the best 125 at the time so I could be honest and still write nice things about the bike!"

As an accomplished pro with a string of big wins over many years behind him, Tony was

>>





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shocked to discover that becoming a test rider involved a new – and steep – learning curve.

"Testing bikes has taught me a big lesson but, unfortunately, it's something I learned after my racing career. You need to think about what the bike's doing probably more so than what you're doing. A world champion is someone who can set his bike up properly – not just someone who can go round a track flat-out and that's what I used to try and do. You need to come off and analyse what the bike's doing and think how you can make it work better for you. That way you go faster and stay on two wheels more so you can avoid injury.

"Suspension is something people sometimes forget about but it's so important to get it set up correctly. You don't necessarily have to go out and spend X amount of money on aftermarket products – you've still then got to go and do the same amount of work with them as you would do with stock stuff. You need to set it up for yourself as an individual so you need to know what the bike wants to do and what the bike needs to do.

"The day I started testing for DBR was the day I started to think about the bike which was too late..."

During his time as our main tester Tony's experienced first-hand how motocross machines have evolved to the standard they're at today and along the way he's witnessed some major advances in technology.

"The biggest single impact on the sport has got to be Yamaha bringing out the 400 four-stroke in '98 and they did it again with the 250F a few years later. The 400 was a completely new project and it was very exciting for me to be able to fly out to Vegas and test it. We didn't know anything about it and I really had no expectations until I'd actually ridden it. It had its teething problems but it was a truly ground-breaking bike and has ultimately been a huge success – you only have to go to a big meeting to see that's the case.

"And KTM made a massive impact with their 125 two-stroke. A standard KTM felt more like a factory Japanese bike in the way it rode, the way the engine developed power. In fact, KTM's 150cc two-stroke is probably my favourite bike ever. As a stock machine it's as close to a full-factory 125 as you're ever going to get. It's a little more difficult to ride – you really have to keep the engine singing which some people seem to struggle with – but get it right and the bike is awesome. I'd say it's the highlight of all the bikes I've tested."

But while over the last 12 years capacities and engine types have changed, suspension has been constantly developed and improved and manufacturers have enjoyed dips and surges in popularity, one thing has remained constant.

"I spent probably the last two years of professional racing with Fox and just before I retired they did a lifetime deal with me. They've been very, very good to me – Ian Calvesbert has always put himself out for me and personally I wouldn't have wished to be associated so closely with any other company in the industry. Fox and DBR have kept me involved in the industry for the last 12 years and along with Jake they've been the lifeline that's kept me involved in motocross.

"But even though I'm not testing for DBR anymore and Jake has stepped it up to the next level and has his own people around him now I can't see myself disappearing from motocross – it's in my blood!"

## WISE WORDS!

### Tony turns teacher

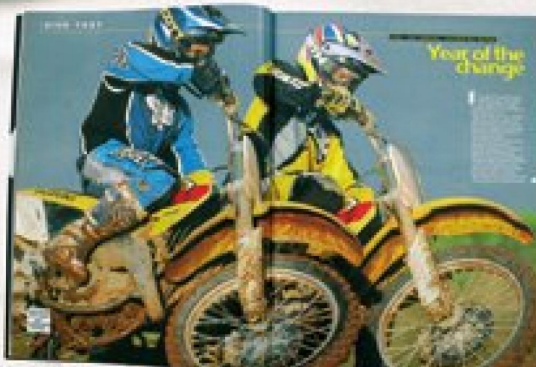
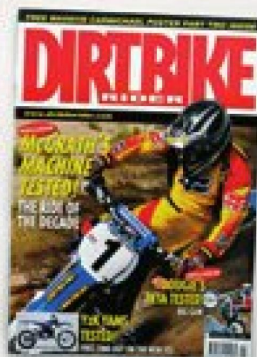
"I totally threw myself into motocross as a kid and threw myself away from schooling which is the biggest mistake I've ever made. I would advise every kid – no matter how good they are – to never, never forget their schooling. We all want to ride as much as we can but you're a lot longer off a bike than you are on a bike.

"Only a very, very small percentage of people will make enough money from riding to set themselves up after their career on the track is over – the rest of us need something to fall back on and that's made so much harder without an education."



© JP O'Connell

KTM's 150 stroker is Tony's all-time favourite



© JP O'Connell

Tony tests the Swift Suzuki in '08 alongside friend and protege Jake Nicholls





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special feature

*View from the fence!  
James Noble gets ready  
for his Tarmac debut*



*Sutty and Nobby get a  
pre-session briefing from  
instructor John Yates*







# ROAD HOGS!

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IT'S THEIR FIRST TIME ON TARMAC BUT STR HONDA'S JAMES NOBLE AND OUR VERY OWN  
DEPUTY DAWGER ARE HAPPY AS PIGS IN \*\*\*\* AT THE RON HASLAM RACE SCHOOL...

Words by **Sutty** Photos by **Jonty Edmunds**

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# W

hile it ticked all the boxes and more on Youthstream's must-have list for a GP venue there's no denying that the Donington Park motocross track pretty much sucked ass and to me that's quite surprising – especially when you

consider that the Derby facility is home to one of the world's best road racing circuits. Already featuring way more in the way of elevation changes and cambers than the now flattened MX track ever had, Donington's 1.95 miles of dangerous curves and scintillatingly speedy straights have pushed thousands of racers to their limit and thrilled millions of fans.

As such an iconic home to Tarmac-based motorsports I was quite surprised to read on the internet that pretty much anyone who takes the time to pre-book can rock up and partake in some furiously fast riding sessions on the full GP circuit with all riding kit, a bike and some expert coaching thrown in for the price of a brand-new pair of Alpinestars Tech-8s. To put that in perspective it's kinda like paying a couple-and-a-half hundred quid to hire out Old Trafford for a kick around with your mates while Sir Alex Ferguson spits encouragement from the sidelines...

Of course someone like Fergie would be firking useless coaching anything at Donington and short of getting Valentino Rossi across to oversee operations there's only one man worthy of the job – the Rocket Man! We're not talking about Elton John here either but a man with no fewer than three road racing world championships, four British titles and a TT win to his name – Mr Ron Haslam.

As a keen competitor in no fewer than 106 road racing GPs, 53-year-old 'Rocket' Ron has plenty of experience when it comes to racing motorcycles on Tarmac. And by using all that knee-down knowledge picked up throughout his glittering career Ron was able to create the Ron Haslam Race School ([www.haslamraceschool.com](http://www.haslamraceschool.com)) some years ago which since then has helped many a rider on their way to asphalt glory including former British youth motocross champions Karl Harris and his own son Leon.

By using motorcycles specifically picked from the excellent Honda range and safety equipment manufactured to the highest standards by Frank Thomas and Arai, as well as catering for racers Ron's schools make it oh-so simple for the Average Joe – aged 12 years upwards – to come and try road racing for the first time in a safe and controlled environment. Of course not everyone who runs through the school is just an average shmoe and when we heard in the DBR office that STR Honda's James Noble was booked in to get a taster of the black stuff I blagged myself an invite too and TranDawg™'ed it down to Donington with much haste.

And that's where I find a very nervous looking Noble perched on pit wall watching a mixture of 500, 600 and 1000cc Honda sports bikes speeding down the start/finish straight at well over one hundred miles an hour. "They're going quite quick, aren't they?" exclaims James and I have to agree – quite quick indeed!

While we're perusing pit row and checking out the CBR600RR machines we'll be riding later on we stumble across the man who'd got us both into this mess – John Yates. John is a former motocross and road racer who now works as one of the many coaches at the Ron Haslam Race School and seeing as though John's two sons are both keen motocross racers who regularly train with James, John was keen to return the favour and teach Nobby a thing or three – hence the invite.

John has to go and coach another session so he leaves us to sign on and get kitted up. With plenty of experience at getting freshers through the system the ever efficient RHRS staff have us fixed up in no time, then it's just a case of slipping into all the kit they provide – helmet, boots, gloves and leathers. Being neck-to-toe in leather is a pretty strange sensation but there's definitely something about wearing a cowhide race-suit that makes you feel oh-so manly...

After figuring out the backwards fastening boots – Velcro goes to the inside – we're good to go and, feeling even butcher than Beth Ditto's latest squeeze, James and I head to part one of the school – the briefing session. This part's basically a sit-down classroom sesh where some guy with a dodgy 'tache tells dodgy jokes but also explains what each flag signal means and what the cones placed around the circuit are there for – red for braking, yellow for turning in and the green cone marks the apex of the turn.

From here we move on to the garages where we get allocated a bike for the day and wait for our instructor to come and get us. As we've already spoken with John when he comes

to collect us there's no need for awkward introductions so we pull on our helmets and get ready to burn some laps.

The CBR fires up right on the button and a quick blip on the throttle confirms that this is indeed a lively beast. With a 600cc four-cylinder DOHC engine lurking under the fairing and unfamiliar ergonomics it would be easy to make a hash of riding these things if left to your own devices but by following John out on the track and directly onto the racing line at a steady pace it's actually less daunting than either of us originally figure and at our very slow pace the Donington circuit seems massive both in length and width.

For most of the first session it's a matter of getting used to how stuff works and the riding techniques are actually very different from off-road with weighting the outside of the bike on corners considered to be a big no-no as is overuse of the rear brake which gets the back wheel chattering coming into corners where you want both wheels as anchored as possible.

The thing I struggle with most in session one is gear selection as all too often I found myself fanning the clutch out of Starkey's hairpin to build up the engine revs from around 5,000RPM when I should have been howling out with at least twice that figure. James doesn't look too comfy either and there's a distinct lack of movement on the bike from the STR teamster.

It all ends far too quickly and with a quick gap between rides there's just time to get some instruction from John. Using a bike on a stand John shows us what we're doing wrong and how to move around on the bike to get the best from the machine. This is where it becomes apparent that the lack of bendability in my right knee is gonna make turning right much more difficult as I'm unable to move my foot on the peg to position myself correctly. Left hand turns aren't a problem which is a bit of a bummer seeing as though the Donington circuit runs in a clockwise direction which means only four of the circuit's 12 curves fall in my favour. Arse!

James picks up some pointers too and when we take to the track for our second session John allows us to go much quicker as he can see in his mirrors that we're starting to get to grips with things. By the end of session two we're pushing on faster and faster and we even pass some of the riders who blew by us in the first session although we're still being smoked by the more regular riders. Regardless of being outridden it's still a whole heap of fun and as the speeds increase so does the fun factor.

All too quickly the session comes to an end and it's back to the classroom for more anecdotes and a prep-talk before our final session which is made even longer when one of the guys out on track stacks it. So while they scrape him off the circuit with a shovel and clear any debris James and I endure another anecdote or two from the golden age of racing...

The last session's a little longer than the first two and feeling more comfortable and confident than ever the pair of us up our speed a little more. John goes first to dictate a safe pace for our skills shown with James following close behind and then my bad self tucked into his exhaust pipe. We run the first 10 minutes in this configuration then John signals us to swap places so coming out of Goddard's I accelerate up to 15,000RPM, bang it up a gear and slip by James on the inside – that'll be the only time that happens anytime soon – to get on John's rear end.

By getting on John's back wheel I'm able to push him to take us faster and for the final half of the last session we speed things up some more – although I'm sure John's barely awake at this point and we're still being passed regularly by the guys on the Elite course! All too soon it's all over and with a grin that's even bigger than my belly we pull into the pits for the last time, park up the bikes and remove our crash helmets.

I can honestly say that it was a lot more fun than I'd ever imagined and although I didn't get my knee down – or get close to it – I didn't have any big scary moments either and I can only put that down to John's excellent coaching and pace-setting skills and the high quality of the bikes and tyres used by the nice people at the RHRS.

While a day at the RHRS isn't exactly cheap – courses cost between £179 for the On-Track experience to £369 for the Elite course – I reckon it still offers great value for money and if you've ever been curious about how it feels to glide through Craner Curves on a bona fide race bike then this is the best way to do it. It's also worth pointing out that a place booked on an early 2010 RHRS will not only offer you the time of your life but you'll also be one of the first to run laps around the reconfigured race circuit that'll be quicker than ever before!

Log on to [www.haslamraceschool.com](http://www.haslamraceschool.com) or call 01332 883323 for more details...



# JAMES' JAUNT!

NOBLE'S NEW SENSATION...

After leaving it a week or so to let him stop shaking we caught up with STR Honda's James Noble at the final round of the Maxxis series at Landrake to find out his thoughts on the RHRS...

**DBR:** So James, what did you make of your afternoon at the Ron Haslam Race School?

**JN:** "All in all it was an awesome experience and I really enjoyed it! Road racing is something I love watching on TV but I never had any want to try it until John organised it for me. I was quite nervous about it at first but when you get out there and do it it's really a lot of fun."

**DBR:** So is road racing something you'd like to do more of?

**JN:** "I'd definitely do the training school again although I'm not sure if I'd want to have a bike on the road because there's always the possibility of getting a bit too excited or there are the problems with other road users. I'd love to do a track day, borrow a bike and get as much time on the bike as possible. At the school you only get three 15-minute sessions and they left you wanting more – that was just a killer!"

**DBR:** What was your favourite part?

**JN:** "The bit I liked the most was getting the bike set up going into the corner, hitting the apex perfectly and then just slowly winding the throttle on until it was right on the stop, then just hooking up through the gears."

**DBR:** How about the racing aspect – is that something you'd enjoy?

**JN:** "It must just be amazing to be involved in a race – with maybe five men battling it out. I was just riding around wondering what it would be like to be riding right on the limit within inches of the other riders – it must be awesome."

**DBR:** How does riding a Honda CBR600RR differ to your normal bike?

**JN:** "The riding technique is so different – on the left-handers I was trying to get the right hand seat in the crack of my arse like on a motocross bike but the reality is that you have to hang off the left hand side – it's all opposite. Also, the odd time coming into the corner I had the inkling to put my leg out and I had to keep telling myself to 'keep the leg on'."

"The brakes are unreal too and it's possible to get on someone's rear wheel and not worry about not having the braking power to slow up if need be."





# TRAVELLING MAN!

THROTTLE-HAPPY TOURIST SCOTT COLUMB SHARES HIS VIEWS ON MOTOCROSS, THE IMMIGRATION SERVICE, PING-PONG AND DOGGING...

Words and photos by Sully

**F**or most young Kiwis their big OE – that's O for overseas and E for experience – is a chance to escape their relatively isolated little country and spend a summer or so boozing it up in Blighty. For Relentless Suzuki's resident New Zealander Scott Columb his OE has been a little different from the norm and a little bit longer too as the wiry haired wonder from Down Under is about to finish his fifth full year of racing motocross on this side of the globe.

Being so far away from home for so long has certainly changed Scott immensely but it's changed him in a very positive manner as he's now much faster, stronger and fitter than before although he's still the ultra laidback fun-loving fun-lover who we first met way back in 2004.

Looking very ordinary out on the track during that first year in Europe – "my best finish was a 13th in a moto of the Maxxis MX2 championship on a 125cc ARW Suzuki" – it was DBR's Tech Ed Godfrey Wacker who first alerted me to Scott's talents although it was the fact that he was a huge world champion that made him stand out at the time.

Seeming to be quite shy and overly conscious of a missing tooth – that I believe he lost wrestling sheep – it's hard to believe that that Scotty is the same Scotty who's now sat lording it up in the Relentless Suzuki team truck, making everyone laugh so hard their insides hurt while Cheryl Hooper tries to concentrate on making hot dogs for the hungry hordes...

"You know I almost didn't make it into the UK the first time I came," says the soon to be 26-year-old. "When I first landed here I was held by immigration for hours and hours and hours. I rolled in and I was a bit tired and being young when the immigration officer asked what I was up to I told her 'I'm just here for a bit of a holiday and to race some bikes'. She asked 'will you be making any money racing bikes?' and without really thinking about it I said 'well yeah, hopefully'."

"Anyway, I didn't have a visa to work or anything like that so they held me in there for a while. Eventually the woman who was

holding me let me go – she was a big lady and a horrible bitch – and she said 'just be thankful I'm having a good day'. I was like thank you very much – welcome to England, huh?"

"And his attitude to England hasn't changed much now," pipes up Cheryl peering through a large pile of lengthways sliced finger rolls.

"I can't say I'm a huge fan," says Scotty tongue-in-cheek. "It's a \*\*\*\* country with too many people living in it, the traffic is terrible and everyone's always miserable. In New Zealand people have a good attitude with an 'it'll be alright' and a 'g'day' to everyone. Y'know, New Zealand is an awesome country with only four-and-a-half million people living there, it's a beautiful place and the weather's good. But the truth is the riders over here are some of the best in the world and the competition is fierce. In New Zealand we don't have that. I'm over here to achieve what I can and see how I can compare to the best riders in the world."

So how is that going? Well, on paper the past four years haven't been so fruitful with just a handful of GP points scored on tours of duty with the Delta, Bodo Schmidt and MTM Suzuki squads. In fact 2008 seemed particularly tough for Scotty who failed to make the cut at the Spanish, Portuguese and British GPs.

"Last year was really difficult for me. MTM did everything they could with me but we were using WP suspension in a Japanese bike and in my opinion that's not the best way to go. The WP tracking system works well with the KTMs but on a bike with a linkage there isn't much point in having it. The riders the team had before me – Smets and Theybers – were all big strong guys who liked their suspension hard and could ride the bikes like that but I'm a lot smaller than those guys and I'd end up wearing myself out on the settings they had."

2008's less than stellar results meant there were no teams a-knockin' for '09 – not even after a strong showing at the Donington des Nations on the MX2 machine. But, being a creature of habit and always looking on the bright side of things, Scotty trained for another season in Europe hoping that a suitable spot would appear... >>







# SCOTTY ON...

## HIS WEEKLY SCHEDULE >>

"A normal week consists of going to Morrisons the supermarket on a Monday morning and eating some bacon and eggs, then washing my gear and doing a bit of cycling. It's not overly interesting if I'm honest..."

## LONG DISTANCE LOVE >>

"I think this year has been quite tough for me on a personal level because I've been here in England full-time away from my Belgian girlfriend Toos. I've been with her for three-and-a-half years now but she studies fashion at Antwerp so I've not been able to see her so much this year."

## MISSING HOME >>

"I miss New Zealand and I miss my hometown of Queenstown where there's plenty going on and I can ride my downhill bike every single day. I fly back just after the des Nations then two days later the Kiwi outdoor nationals start – it's a four-round series and I'll race that on the MX2 bike. It should be between myself and Mikey Phillips for the title."

## GOING TO AMERICA >>

"I'd love to go racing in America – I love going racing anywhere. The thing with America is that it's more glamorous – the tracks look better and supercross looks crazy but fun. I think in America you seem to get more money even if you're not on such a good ride. With the contingency plans if you've got the right logos on and get decent results you can do well. It's like that even at those amateur races – some of those kids are on huge money."

## DOGGING >>

"Dogging is one thing that I've been informed about – I can't say who told me about it – but it's pretty interesting. There's one dogging area on my cycling route but every time I go past there's always just three guys sat there in their cars. I'm like what's going on here? Where are all the girls at? The guys seem friendly as \*\*\*\* though and they definitely give me a little smile and a wave when I ride my bike through though. They're like 'Hello! How are you?' We don't have dogging in New Zealand but then again we don't have many things – we've only just got the internet..."



Scotty started the season without a ride until Rob Hooper came to his rescue





The former world luge champion turns some laps at Apex

"I was just doing a lot of cycling and practising supercross at the jump park when I got a call from Rob [Hooper] saying he had a ride for me but it would just be for a few races. I jumped at the chance even though it was all a bit last-minute and I didn't get to ride the bike until qualifying at the first Maxxis at Canada Heights. But it went quite well and we built things up from there.

"All in all it's been a pretty good year for me racing wise. Besides the Maxxis you have the Red Bull Pro Nationals, the MMX and the KWS and in those championships the racing is hard because you've got guys like Nunn, Noble, the pirate Brad Anderson, Banks-Browne and Barr all going for it – a lot of ex GP riders who are all really fast.

"I feel like my riding has improved immensely and if you consider when I first came and raced in the British championship the best result I had was a 13th in one moto in the MX2 class and now I've just finished the season eighth in the premier MX1 class it's obvious that things are coming along.

"The Hooper team set-up has helped too and the bike has definitely been a lot better this year. Everything's good with the Relentless team's equipment – the suspension, the exhausts and even the Answer clothing the team uses. I really wasn't a fan of the Wulfsport stuff I was wearing last year but I guess I'm a fussy b\*\*\*\*\* as well."

And there's something else the Hoopers have brought to Scotty's game that he feels helps with success – ping-pong!

"I live in Rugely with Rob, Cheryl and Martin Barr. It's a pretty boring

town really with plenty of heroin addicts and fighters so we daren't step out at night – we play ping-pong instead! I'm the champion at it too. My on-track form hasn't been so great lately and I believe that's because Rob hasn't taken the time out to play me. That's probably because I used to annihilate him with my speed and my accuracy. Since we've not been playing it my results on the track haven't been the same and I'm definitely gonna blame the lack of ping-pong."

Are you serious?

"Totally! The movement of the wrists is good for loosening up the arms and the over arm swings and the shoulder movement all helps with the riding you know – the hand/eye coordination etc. I've got so many serves and spins I just kill Rob and his eyesight isn't so good now either so that makes it a bit easier."

Rob steps in to defend his honour at this point... "I'd just like to point out that I can still win sometimes," claims the former British MXdN team member. "He cheats though. When I'm on top he'll always find a way to distract me or upset the flow of the game. Maybe cheat is not the right word – let's just say he uses tactics."

And that's maybe another way Scott can use his ping-pong skills to further his motocross career – the world of sport psychology...

"I do need more focus and stuff," admits Scott. "At the start of this year I didn't even have a ride and I only really came on board to fill in for injured riders so it was all a bit disorganised. I'm gonna have a bit more of a game plan next year and I'm definitely going to put a lot more into it."







# FULL BRAZILIAN!

MARVIN MUSQUIN WAXES 'EM IN CANELINHA TO CLINCH HIS MAIDEN MX2 WORLD TITLE...

Photos by Sarah Gutierrez

It's been a strange old year for 19-year-old French MX2 racer Marvin Musquin who started out the season as an NGS Honda pilot before jumping ship to the factory KTM team just prior to the British GP. Ensuing legal problems then saw the frenetic Frenchman completely miss the Swedish round of the series altogether but still amazingly kept hold of the championship leader's red plate. Despite all the on and off track difficulties Marv's attack has been solid throughout and after a double win at the final round of the series in Canelinha, Brazil, the #25 rider finally clinches the title.

For a while it looks as though Marv may capture the crown without even turning a wheel in South America as heavy rains batter the Canelinha circuit and soak the track surface's soil to saturation point and Saturday's practice and qualification schedule is put on hold. But better weather on Sunday sees a hastily rearranged qualification and race schedule put into place.

Despite being a little on the claggy side first thing and not coming across too well on TV all day the racing's actually awesome as Musquin beats off the attentions of Steven Frossard and Ken Roczen in a pair of



## SERIES STANDINGS

### MX1>>

1	Tony Cairoli	Yamaha Red Bull De Carli	561 points
2	Max Nagl	Red Bull KTM	525
3	Clement Desalle	LS Motors Honda	508
4	David Philippaerts	Yamaha Monster Energy	497
5	Ken De Dycker	Teka Suzuki	495
6	Josh Coppins	Yamaha Monster Energy	485
7	Tanel Leok	Yamaha Red Bull De Carli	395
8	Gareth Swanepoel	Kawasaki Racing Team	262
9	Jon Barragan	Silver Action KTM	229
10	Steve Ramon	Teka Suzuki	217
15	Tom Church	Buildbase CCM Racing	134
18	Billy MacKenzie	CAS Honda	107
20	Jason Dougan	Phoenix Tools CCM Racing	93
27	James Noble	MVR-D Suzuki	39
28	Bryan MacKenzie	CAS Honda	37
31	Brad Anderson	PAR Honda	24
37	Carl Nunn	MVR-D Suzuki	18
60	Jordan Rose	STR Honda	3

### MX2>>

1	Marvin Musquin	Red Bull KTM	540 points
2	Rui Goncalves	Red Bull KTM	500
3	Gautier Paulin	Bud Racing Kawasaki	437
4	Davide Guarneri	Yamaha Ricci Racing	418
5	Ken Roczen	Teka Suzuki	390
6	Steven Frossard	CLS Kawasaki	332
7	Joel Roelants	KTM Junior Team	311
8	Manuel Monni	3C Racing Yamaha	284
9	Nicolas Aubin	Yamaha Ricci Racing	256
10	Xavier Boog	Teka Suzuki	253
17	Jake Nicholls	Red Bull KTM UK	156
19	Shaun Simpson	Red Bull KTM	134
21	Stephen Sword	Red Bull KTM UK	105
23	Zach Osborne	UTAG Yamaha	102
35	Mel Pocock	UTAG Yamaha	33
55	Neville Bradshaw	DB Racing Honda	2



...then pops his cork  
to celebrate

bar-to-bar duels that make jetting across the Atlantic seem well worthwhile, kind of. The top-10 in the series standings actually stays static as Rui Goncalves, Gautier Paulin, Davide Guarneri, Roczen, Frossard, Joel Roelants, Manuel Monni, Nico Aubin and Xavier Boog all consolidate their positions.

One of the few men able to gain an advantage in Brazil is Red Bull KTM UK's Jake Nicholls who jumps to 17th in the final championship countdown with another cracking performance while Shaun Simpson scores consistently but remains firmly planted in 19th position. None of the other Brits – or even adopted Brits – make the trip across the Atlantic in the MX2 class so their scores remain settled.

In the MX1 division Tony Cairoli's already won the title and it would take a minor miracle for Max Nagl to fall out of the runner-up spot so the real battle of interest is for third...

Coming in to Canelinha disposed world champ David Philippaerts sits in the bronze medal position but he's only two points clear of the man-on-form Clement Desalle who himself has a meagre two-point buffer over compatriot Ken De Dycker. In theory it's De Dycker who should be particularly dangerous in Brazil as the Belgian man mountain definitely feels he has a point to prove after not only losing his Teka Suzuki team

ride but also a Belgian des Nation's spot to the LS Motors Honda rider.

But rather than De Dycker proving that he should be the chosen one it's Desalle who goes home with his head held high – but obviously not as high as his elbows because that would be impossible – as he runs 1-2 on the day to take the GP win and claim that third spot in the series! Philippaerts clinches fourth with his 3-7 score on the day while De Dycker ends up fifth after running a disappointing 5-5 in Brazil.

And 10 places further back in the title chase is Buildbase CCM's Tom Church who ends up a career best 15th and also finishes as highest placed Brit in his rookie year with the Bolton-based manufacturer. Team-mate Jason Dougan is the only other Brit present in Brazil and after running 12-DNF narrowly misses out on 19th in the series standings but does consolidate his 20th place.

By missing Brazil due to his ongoing injury woes Billy MacKenzie drops from 16th to 18th in the championship but behind the Scotsman not a thing changes among the GP regulars – except for Marc De Reuver leapfrogging Loic Leonce to claim 24th place! Best Brazilian in MX1 is Antonio Balbi who ends the day 10th overall while his sister Mariana finishes moto two in 20th place to become the first female MX1 GP points scorer – a good day for the Balbi family and Brazilian MX in general.



# F U L L ENGLISH!

LIKE A HUNGRY MOTOCROSS FAN EATING AN OH-SO SATISFYING BREAKFAST AT LITTLE CHEF, THE MAXXIS BRITISH MOTOCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP SAVES THE BEST BIT UNTIL LAST...

Words and photos by Sully

**A**ny DBR staff member will tell you that early starts and a lot of miles mean regular stops at Little Chef are necessary. And with journeys to this year's Maxxis series adding up to around 3,500 miles in total that's a whole lotta Olympic Breakfasts to be consumed and then billed to the regimental credit card.

Believe it or not I'm a bit of a fussy eater and to enjoy my OB in full I have to attack it in a particular way saving the best bit for last. With this in mind I feel that in some ways this year's British championships are a lot like an OB – eight items of varying tastiness all served up to be consumed as a whole. Scrumdiddlyumptious!

To begin with you've got Canada Heights – very dependable and a solid start to build from just like the OB's baked beans. Langrish is an acquired taste similar to the mushroom while Brampton isn't for everyone either – kinda like a grilled tomato. Hawkstone's a real meaty one that takes a man to tame – pork sausage anyone? – while the masses of arable land on the way to Lyng makes me associate that race with potatoes – sautéed not chipped, mashed or manufactured into a hash brown thank you very much. The summer sun at Foxhill makes round six tasty while Duns turns out to be not dissimilar to a fried egg – too sloppy and it ruins everything! That just leaves the crispy bacon of the series left – round eight in Landrake.

While the last round of the year could have been a flat one – as both champions have already been crowned in Scotland – it's really not the case as not only does the MX1 division become the unofficial MXdN shootout for the final team place but there's also second in the MX2 series to sort out between The Reverend Jake Nicholls and DB Racing's Neville Bradshaw.

The first moto is a barn stormer with Bradshaw running second early doors behind his team-mate Mike Phillips while Jake's hauling through the pack from a less than stellar start. But the dynamics of the race change on lap three as Phillips makes a minor mistake but goes down anyway and Bradshaw runs out of room and gets tangled up as well!

This leaves MVR-D Suzuki's Mattis Karro out front with a hard-charging Nicholls charging hard behind while young guns Alan Keet and Mel Pocock keep pushing to stay ahead of veteran Frenchman Pascal Leuret

on the MAR Honda. With Bradshaw running a lap down after he fails to get his red hot Honda to fire up quickly everything looks to be going in Jake's favour until he tangles with Karro and they both go down too. While Mattis struggles to get going again Jake's up and away quite quickly but not before the teenage trio of Keet, Pocock and Scott Elderfield throttle through.

With the laps running down Pocock's able to make a move on Keet for the lead which is how things stay to the chequers with Mel Jnr taking his first ever Maxxis championship moto while Keet holds off Elderfield for the runner-up spot. Meanwhile, Nicholls is fourth and Bradshaw 19th which means Jake holds an 11-point advantage going into race two.

Motivated to take the overall victory on the day rather than ride a steady race and do the counting game, Jake rockets to an early lead in race two but after stretching out a massive gap on the first lap gets it all wrong just after the mechanics' area and goes down like a sack o' Suffolk spuds. Luckily he's unhurt but unluckily his front brake is jammin' harder than Bob Marley could ever dream of and he has a whole tour to trail ride before he can get it fixed! Losing loads of time on the lap and a good half-minute in the pits while the team make a hasty repair – of sorts – Jake eventually gets going again in last place but with no front brake.

Bradshaw's flying meanwhile and with only Karro ahead of him the 22 points he'll score for second should secure the runner-up spot in the series no stress. But let's not forget that Jake's one tenacious mother trucker and the 19-year-old gets his head down and rides the race of his life.

When Bradshaw crosses the line in second behind the Latvian at the end of the moto Jake's in 12th which would give Nev the nod and even as Pocock punches the air as he claims fourth to take the overall Jake's still out of luck. But with less than half-a-lap to go Nicholls whizzes past warring youth racers Luke Hawkins and Josh Waterman to claim 10th and turns things around in one of the most exciting ends to a championship since Swordy stole the series win from Billy Mac at Polesworth way back in 2001!

Fast forward back to the present day and the Scots are set to do battle at the final round once more only this time the only thing on the line is pride. Swordy's already

wrapped up the '09 MX2 title but is stepping up to the 450 class to try and claim the final MXdN team spot along with Shaun Simpson who's doing the same. Billy Mac's already guaranteed a team place but after a troublesome year is hungry to win at least one Maxxis moto in '09 after giving up his title to Brad Anderson who'll miss this event with a broken thumb.

Simpson sets the early pace in moto one ahead of Bry Mac, Tom Church, Swordy and US legend Ryan Hughes while Billy's way away back in 13th position. But he doesn't stay there long and charging through the pack like a rhino he's soon past the other Ryno, Swordy and TC and all over Simpson as they fight for the lead. It's a classic MacKenzie ride and although it's far from pretty the ultra-efficient Scotsman soon moves into an unassailable lead. Simpson nails down second while Swordy overcomes TC for third.

Moto two is a very different beast though as Bry Mac leaps out of the gate and into an early lead ahead of Swordy, Simpson and Big Jock Billy who accidentally makes contact with Simpson in turn five and takes the younger Scot down. Billy himself slips off two laps later leaving cousin Bry to uphold CAS Honda honour but he can't hold the lead position for long as Swordy finds his rhythm and steams past. Much like MacKenzie's ride in the first, Swordy's second moto performance is classic stuff as the 29-year-old controls the race from the front and has plenty in hand even when STR Honda's James Noble makes a mid-race charge.

There's no stopping the elder Scotsman though and his 3-1 scorecard also gives him the overall win ahead of Billy Mac's 1-3 and that other north to south border jumper Jason Dougan who goes 5-4 on the Phoenix Tools CCM.

With the Maxxis plate licked clean for another year there's only one thing left to enjoy and that's the annual mechanics' race that takes the place of the rectangular lemon lolly of this particular meal. Full of ringers – as is the norm – it's CAS Honda's Neil Prince who beats LPE Kawasaki's Ryan Voase across the line by just over a second to take victory. The leading actual wrench across the line is Billy Mac's main man Paul Teasdale who edges out CCM truck driver David Yelland for the final podium spot!

## FINAL SERIES STANDINGS

### MX1 >>

1	Brad Anderson	PAR Homes Honda	289
2	Gareth Swanepoel	KRT Kawasaki	250
3	James Noble	STR Honda	231
4	Tom Church	Buildbase CCM	212
5	Carl Nunn	MVR-D Suzuki	193
6	Billy MacKenzie	CAS Honda	192
7	Jason Dougan	Phoenix Tools CCM	184
8	Scott Colum	Relentless Suzuki	174
9	Bryan MacKenzie	CAS Honda	137
10	Jordan Rose	STR Honda	123

### MX2 >>

1	Stephen Sword	Red Bull KTM UK	274
2	Jake Nicholls	Red Bull KTM UK	244
3	Neville Bradshaw	DB Racing Honda	243
4	Martin Barr	Relentless Suzuki	213
5	Scott Elderfield	PAR Honda	205
6	Mattis Karro	MVR-D Suzuki	195
7	Mel Pocock	UTAG Yamaha	177
8	Pascal Leuret	MAR Honda	171
9	Graeme Irwin	Red Bull KTM UK	168
10	Wayne Smith	Samsung Yamaha	156







*Swordy steps up to MX1 and claims the overall on the day – but not the final place on the MXdN team*



*The MX1 men prepare to hammer uphill with, from left, Shaun Simpson, Billy Mac, Jordan Rose, Gareth Swanepoel, Danny Smyth and Kristian Whatley*



*UTAG Yamaha's Mel Pocock is overall winner in MX2*



*After a testing season  
David Knight ends the  
year with a win in France*



*Antoine Meo ends  
the year as the  
fastest man in E1*



*Battling Brit Si Wakely*





# FULL TIME!

IVAN CERVANTES AND MIKA AHOLA COMPLETE THE LINE-UP OF '09 WEC CHAMPS WHILE KNIGHTER GETS BACK TO HIS WINNING WAYS AT THE GP OF FRANCE

Words and photos by Jonty Edmunds

It was never going to be an 'easy' year but it certainly wasn't supposed to be his most challenging WEC season to date. But after falling out of love with the BMW Motorrad Motorsport team – and then joining the UK-based KSRT Kawasaki squad – '09 has been one hell of a rollercoaster ride for Britain's David Knight.

Thankfully, due to solid performances at the final round of the WEC series, DK brings things to a close on a positive note with E2 victory on the final day of the '09 world champs in France.

"The last few months have been really hard but it's all been worth it with this winning result," comments the big fella after he completes the final day of the '09 WEC series. "Coming back to the WEC after my split from BMW was never going to be easy. With Kawasaki we've taken a motocross bike and put it on top of a WEC E2 podium. I never doubted that I still had what was needed to win, it's just that when you start afresh with a new bike midway through the season, well, it's tough. But we did it."

Fourth and third at the GP of Greece, Knighter places a close second on day one of the series' final round before ending the season with victory on day two. Battling with former team-mate Juha Salminen on both days, Knighter gives Kawasaki their first WEC win in more years than most can remember.

With WEC titles still to be decided in France it's Spaniard Ivan Cervantes who's the big winner at the end of the first day. Despite being beaten by home duo Christophe Nambotin and Seb Guillaume, Ivan does enough to secure the '09 E3 title – his fourth enduro world championship. "This year has been perfect," says Ivan who was beaten into second position in the '08 E1 championship. "I won the Indoor Enduro World Cup with the 300cc two-stroke and now the E3 title with the four-stroke KTM. I'm so happy."

Second behind Ivan in the E3 championship is Gasser-mounted Nambotin who claims a double class win to end '09. Third goes to Guillaume as two-strokes out-number four-strokes two-to-one at the top of the E3 championship standings.

The rider to beat in the E1 class at both the GP of Mexico and the GP of Greece, Antoine Meo again wins big at the WEC final round and tops the 250cc screamer class on both days. But it's Antoine's closest rival Mika Ahola who lifts the E1 title as the Finn's third and fourth place results give him a second consecutive E1 crown.

"It's been a strange race for me," explains Mika. "I knew I didn't need to finish on the podium on either day to win the championship which made deciding how hard I should push difficult. I started taking things easy but I crashed. After that I started to really attack. Antoine has been really fast during the second half of the season. I'm just pleased that I rode well during the first half of the year and opened up a points lead."

With Antoine winning on both days he shows he's going to take some beating in '10. French Yamaha rider Marc Germain places as runner-up on both days while Finn Eero Remes replaces Ahola as the third placed rider on day two.

With Spain's Oriol Mena already crowned the Enduro Junior champion the biggest class of the event is topped by home riders Sebastien Bozzo and Benoit Fortunato. A much improved rider to the one who started the season, Fortunato is rewarded with a factory Husaberg contract for '10.

## FINAL STANDINGS

### ENDURO 1 >>

1	Mika Ahola	Honda	373 points
2	Antoine Meo	Husqvarna	358
3	Simone Albergoni	KTM	305
4	Eero Remes	KTM	253
5	Thomas Oldrati	KTM	237

### ENDURO 2 >>

1	Johnny Aubert	KTM	325 points
2	Juha Salminen	BMW	319
3	Joakim Ljunggren	Husaberg	264
4	Cristobal Guerrero	Yamaha	251
5	Rodrig Thain	TM	225

### ENDURO 3 >>

1	Ivan Cervantes	KTM	366 points
2	Christophe Nambotin	Gas Gas	342
3	Seb Guillaume	Husqvarna	325
4	Samuli Aro	KTM	258
5	Marcus Kehr	KTM	226

### ENDURO JUNIOR >>

1	Oriol Mena	Husaberg	294 points
2	Benoit Fortunato	Yamaha	294
3	Jeremy Joly	Honda	216
4	Victor Guerrero	Yamaha	212
5	Mirko Gritti	Beta	190



Mika Ahola rides safe for the E1 title





*At every Red Bull Pro Nat round the track has been treated to perfect prep*





Swordy tears up the track on the 450cc Red Bull KTM UK machine

# FULL STOP!

IT'S NUNNY AND THE NEVSTER ON TOP AS THE RED BULL PRO NATS COME TO A NAIL-BITING CONCLUSION AT WAKES COLNE...

Photos by Ian Roxburgh

**T**he names of MVR-D Suzuki's Carl Nunn and DB Racing Honda's Neville Bradshaw are etched into the history books as the first ever Red Bull Pro Nationals champions!

The series that has shaken and stirred British motocross into life once again delivers at the final round at Wakes Colne which is back staging a major MX event – and what an event it is! The MC Federation put together another brilliant weekend – it has colour, vibrancy and atmosphere all of which, gelled together with some brilliant racing, make the last round of the championship one to remember. Especially for Nunn and Bradshaw.

With the paddock moved to a new field at the bottom of the circuit everything has a different feel to any other race at Wakes Colne in the past, especially with freestyle motocross plonked bang smack in the middle of the circuit with all the spectators. Again there's a huge TV and a pumping sound system to help create the festival atmosphere that's been one of the trademarks of this series.

A big portion of the 5,000 fans that flood in are experiencing motocross for the first time as the tension for the championship starts to build and they aren't disappointed. The combined MX1 and MX2 races have provided some awesome racing all year and the final round is no different.

Qualifying sets the tone of the day as only .2 of a second separates the top three of Red Bull

KTM UK's Stephen Sword, series leader Carl Nunn and STR/ Proppa.com Honda's James Noble and Alan Keet who qualified in 10th as the third quickest MX2 rider is only two seconds off Swordy's time!

The first Pro National race is a rip-snorting, bar-banging affair and almost impossible to keep up with! James Noble gets the early lead but has Stephen Sword taking in his exhaust fumes in every breath as he looks to impress and prove a point at not being selected for the MXdN team. A few laps in Swordy tries sticking his KTM between Noble and the inside post of a hairpin and both bikes get locked together. While they frantically try to pull them apart the rest of the front runners go by and they soon find themselves way back down the field.

Relentless Suzuki's Martin Barr picks up the pace and works himself to the front of the pack on his MX2 machine ahead of team-mate Scott Columb but then Barr goes down hard just before the finish line and retires from the race. By now Nunn's finding his groove ahead of the likes of LPE Kawasaki's Elliott Banks-Browne and PAR Honda's Scott Elderfield. But Noble's in an even tighter groove as he storms back through, picking off all of his rivals to nail down the moto win.

Nunny eventually finds a way past Columb for second but it still isn't enough to secure the crown while back down the field Bradshaw claws his way through and closes the gap to >>



It's a case of close but no cigar for James Noble





Nunny ends the season as MX1 champ and scoops the Proppa.com Van Slam sprint title n'all

just six points on Samsung Yamaha's Wayne Smith in the quest for the MX2 championship going into the final moto. He finishes sixth in the race and third MX2 rider across the line behind Elderfield and his team-mate Michael Phillips but he manages to put Pro Seal's Alan Keet between him and Smith for valuable extra points. The stage is set and it's going down to the wire.

Nunn has a 39-point advantage going into the final race of the year and just has to see it home to take the MX1 Red Bull Pro National crown. The fight that everyone is interested in is for the MX2 championship between Smith and Bradshaw – and what a fight it is! With Noble and Nunn away at the front with Sword and Banks-Browne chasing, all eyes are already on the leading MX2 riders. You can feel the tension in the air as Smith tucks in behind Bradshaw, keeping him in sight and trying not to make any mistakes and throw away the title.

But as the race goes on Nev starts to edge away as he goes for it with nothing to lose and everything to gain. Smithy knows the championship is his if he can stay one place behind and hold onto his three-point advantage but with Elderfield closing fast and MVR-D wild card Nicoli Larsen pushing him along the pressure starts to build.

With about five laps to go Elderfield really starts to turn up the heat as he chases down his first overall victory in the

series. After relentless pressure and weaving all over the back of Smith trying to find a way past he eventually forces a move which gives him the overall and swings the title pendulum Bradshaw's way.

Now tying on points with Nev's more race wins putting him in pole, Wayne regroups, finds his focus and then goes for broke and starts to close back in on Elderfield. With two laps to go Smith gets back around Elderfield and the pendulum swings again – but less than a lap later Scotty, desperate for the overall win, returns the compliment to seal the overall for himself and the title for Bradshaw.

Back up in MX1 Nunny rides a steady and smart race to follow Noble home and take the MX1 title and wrap up a great series for him. Not only has he taken the Red Bull Pro National crown, he also grabs the Proppa.com Van Slam championship and gets his hands on a pimping new VW transporter van.

In the final two-lap sprint race of the mini-series within a series Nunny soon puts a move on Noble who grabs the holeshot and holds it to the line to win the van in style. By his own admission winning the van has been on his mind for some time and he's stoked to finally put that one to bed and drive away in new wheels especially as – in Carl's words – his own van is "hanging"!



## FINAL STANDINGS

### MX1 >>

1 Carl Nunn	MVR-D Suzuki	510 points
2 James Noble	STR/Proppa.com Honda	474
3 Scott Columb	Relentless Suzuki	349
4 Danny Smyth	Wiseco Honda	329
5 Jordan Rose	STR/Proppa.com Honda	326

### MX2 >>

1 Neville Bradshaw	DB Racing Honda	429 points
2 Wayne Smith	Samsung Yamaha	429
3 Graeme Irwin	Red Bull KTM UK	320
4 Michael Phillips	DB Racing Honda	284
5 Alan Keet	Pro Seal KTM	251

### PROPPA.COM VAN SLAM CHAMPION >>

Carl Nunn MVR-D Suzuki

Scott Elderfield's pass on Wayne Smith hands Nev Bradshaw the MX2 title





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# BYMXBLITZ!

FANTASTIC FOUR SEW UP CROWNS AT FOXHILL FINALE

**W**ith one space in the trophy cabinet reserved for championship gongs already won, Josh Waterman (MX2 champion), Ben Watson (EYC SW champion) and Conrad Mewse (EYC Junior 65 champion) checked into Foxhill riding a tidal wave of confidence for the finale of this year's BYMX competition.

All three had virtually untouchable points leads and they only needed a short shift down in Wiltshire on day one in order to pocket the necessary numbers so that title-winning celebration number two could begin. And all three of them are now double British champions.

On day two Ben and Conrad went on to complete awesome clean sweeps in their respective sections, claiming a total of five race wins each. As for Josh Waterman? Well, he unpacked a 125cc stroker for a bit of Sunday fun to the obvious delight of his two-stroke enthusiast dad Phil and Danger UK spannerman Chris Barker.

In an amazing Sunday display up against the 250F brigade, Josh went on to win the weekend battle claiming one race win in a series of three epic races with Luke Hawkins, Jack Rowland and Connor Walkley. Having praised Josh however it's only fair to balance the account as Luke binned it big style in race three. If it hadn't been for that one mistake Luke would have surely won the weekend and claimed third in the final championship table too.

Luke looked equally awesome over the weekend winning three of the five races. Three wins that could well have been four. In the final moto a grandstand finish looked on the cards as Luke had Josh lined up in his sights just as the race was cut short with Anthony Reville spark-out following a big get-off. Jack Rowland claimed the missing moto win in a bruising encounter – well it was bruising for Connor Walkley all right with Jack using him as a temporary launch pad on his way to the 45-point race win and second place in the final championship standings.

Jack finished the season as the top 16-year-old as 15-year-old Connor hung onto third place in the championship with yet another gutsy, no-nonsense, totally professional display – ultimately being really unlucky not to claim a series first race win for Kawasaki.

With three of the titles settled the main focus of attention now centred on the battle between Ryan Houghton and Nathan Watson in the BW division plus a tighter than tight two-way tear-up happening between Callan Cooper and Connor Clark for the silver medal in the Small Wheels. Both encounters went to the final races of the year for a decision.

Nathan did all he could possibly do in his efforts to win the prize claiming

five more totally emphatic race wins that took his season's tally to a more than impressive 20 from 34 starts. That result gave the Watson brothers a historic first BYMX 10 out of 10 weekend score. But Ryan hung onto his nerve brilliantly as he shouldered all the pressure impressively to claim the BW title with a safe 4-2-4-5-5 card.

Great weekend performances also from Sunny Thompson, Luke Norris and Jake Millward kept everything honest and lively close to Ryan as did Jordan Godwin, Ben Howell and Liam Garland. At the end of the day however the BW season condensed down to a tale of two top talents in Ryan and Nathan. Ryan – the younger of the duo – took an early lead in the series and looked invincible at times in the opening rounds. Nathan completely dominated the second half of the season following a few unlucky breaks early doors but the bottom line is Ryan gets his name carved on the trophy courtesy of a 23-point winning margin.

The Small Wheel head-to-head between Callan Cooper and Connor Clark looked to be going Cooper's way as he took a clear points advantage all the way to the start of race four. A disappointing sixth place finish however for Callan as he struggled to get off the line with Clarky finishing in second place meant his advantage was now just five points, turning the final race of the championship into a real nail-biter.

As the gate dropped Connor made a terrific start behind Watson but Callan found himself back in 13th place following another poor start and with a log jam of talent in front of him. With the task of getting himself up to fourth place if he were to claim the prize the tension was almost unbearable for the Cooper clan. Callan had the lap speed and he picked his way through the posse skilfully but agonisingly it only resulted in sixth place again, just two points short at the final count. Agony on one side of the paddock but ecstasy on the other.

The other main little contest of the Foxhill finale came in the Junior 65s as Henry Williams did enough to claim the runner-up position despite Sid Evans nabbing all the second place finishes. Sid settled for third in the championship as Aaron Piper delivered the goods to snatch fourth place from Connor Hughes.

Elsewhere on the weekend a sparkling Open class debut performance from Jamie McCanney on the Yamaha plus a return to racing for Brad Pocock put a few more smiles on a few more faces. Also smiling were the guys at ACU HQ as Brad's academy team-mates lifted three out of the four BYMX youth titles.



Brad Pocock returns to racing at Foxhill



Ryan Houghton with brothers Jamie (left) and Louis



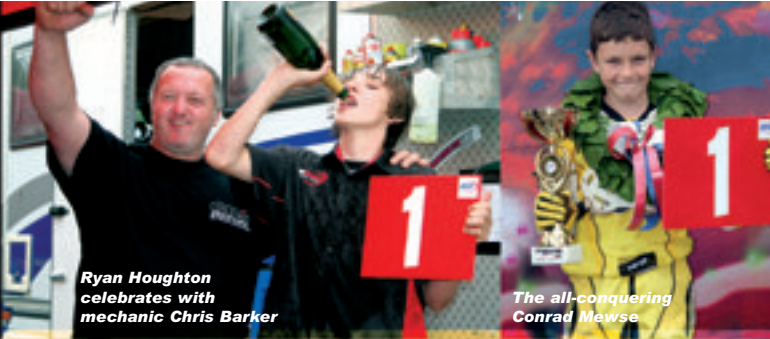
Sunny Thompson and Luke Norris



Jack Rowland is runner-up in the Open division while SW85cc top honours go to Ben Watson (below left)







Ryan Houghton celebrates with mechanic Chris Barker

The all-conquering Conrad Mewse



Good times for Josh Waterman and posse

## FINAL STANDINGS

### 65cc

1	Conrad Mewse	1509 points
2	Henry Williams	1324
3	Sid Evans	1276
4	Aaron Piper	1151
5	Connor Hughes	1138
6	Jack Camwell	1127

### SW85cc

1	Ben Watson	1481 points
2	Connor Clark	1318
3	Callan Cooper	1316
4	Tom Neal	1242
5	Corie Southwood	1188
6	Liam Knight	1173

### BW85cc

1	Ryan Houghton	1355 points
2	Nathan Watson	1332
3	Sunny Thompson	1254
4	Jake Millward	1242
5	Ben Howell	1108
6	Jordan Godwin	1086

### OPEN

1	Josh Waterman	1444 points
2	Jack Rowland	1299
3	Connor Walkley	1218
4	Luke Hawkins	1197
5	Ewan McClaren	1053
6	Aaron Jenner	1030



Waterman yanks the holey



Liam Garland leads the BW charge

## FAMILY TIES!

It often happens in the youth paddock that a famous name from the past will pop up just to stir the memory as the latest young member of that particular family enters the fray and starts to make a mark.

This season Max Bickers has been making good progress in the Junior 65cc ranks. Max is the son of former British championship runner Paul and grandson of 1960s legend Dave. He has a lot to live up to sporting his famous name but with a promising 10th overall at Foxhill and another year racing 65s, keep your eye on young Mr Bickers. Max has the potential to finish in the top six next year but first of all it's off to the Weston Beach Race followed by a winter of preparations mainly in the Mildenhall series.

And finally just because you have one famous name stuck on your bike's plastics doesn't mean you couldn't do with a few more so if any potential sponsors would like to see their name sitting alongside a famous one from the past fire off an email to [paul@bickers.co.uk](mailto:paul@bickers.co.uk)

Max Bickers and his proud dad Paul



Matty waves goodbye to Blighty

## OFFT00Z!

Going back to the final answer in the Connor Clark Q and A... All the very best to Matthew and the rest of the Callaghan family as they head off to Australia and warmer climes in November. The Callaghans have been an ever-present happy crew and a real force to boot on the national circuit since 2006. Always ready with a warm smile, a witty answer and a cold beer. So I for one will definitely be missing them!

Don't forget to pack your sunnies and your factor 50 guys. And Matty, if you wanna become my Southern Hemisphere youth correspondent keeping Rage up to speed on the youth events Down Under the job's yours...

Keep in touch, eh!





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Connor Clark fought back at Foxhill to nail second in the BYMX SW series

SPOTLIGHT ON...

# CONNOR CLARK

DOB: 26-6-96 HOMETOWN: KNOTTINGLEY, WEST YORKSHIRE RIDE: KTM

**M**ore often than not ending up in second place can be a real disappointment. If you don't believe me just ask Nathan Watson! So how is it possible to feel like a real winner when you have just finished as the runner-up in a championship?

To get the answer to that particular puzzle you needed to look no further than the Connor Clark camp as they celebrated to the max following the final BYMX SW race at Foxhill. As the fat lady sang Connor delivered a truly crushing final burst and he logged four second place finishes that ultimately secured the silver medal following a first race nightmare.

That first race 20th place finish seemed to have blown his chances at the time as he handed a clear points advantage to Callan Cooper, his main rival for silver. At the end of the day, however, it all proved just enough for Clarky whose totally brilliant display also made him something of a real winner too for me as he nailed down the best of the rest title.

It's been a truly absorbing season-long contest for that particular honour taking place just behind Ben Watson in both the BYMX and EYC competitions. Fending off a freight train of equally matched performers including Tom Neal, Matthew Callaghan, Ollie Osmaston, Corie Southwood, Liam Knight and Callan has been no easy task. And it's been compulsive viewing! This year at one point it looked as if Tom Neal would be named top chaser or possibly Matty Callaghan or even Corie Southwood with his brilliant late-season form.

But at the end of the day it all boiled down to a straight BYMX choice between two of the elder statesmen of the class – Callan or Connor. The constant SW shuffle behind Mr Watson has been the best competition within a competition for years and Clarky won it.

This year Connor has been competing in his third season of SW action and he has upped his game quite considerably after finishing 13th last term and 22nd the year before. The 13-year-old is finishing

this season in the best form of his young life. Already he is looking like being one of the warmer tickets for next year's BW class so Rage decided to share a few words with him at Foxhill...

**Rage:** Congratulations Connor on a terrific season so far but can you put your finger on the reason for the impressive and improved form this year?

**CC:** "I'm not really too sure but I have grown a lot this year and I feel a lot stronger physically."

**Rage:** At Cusses Gorse earlier in the year you toyed with the idea of switching to a Honda 150F. Will you be considering the extra punch that the four-stroke offers for the BW class next year?

**CC:** "Not really, I don't think so. As things are going so well right now we will be sticking with the KTM. I think it suits my style better too."

**Rage:** What are the plans for the winter and targets for next year?

**CC:** "Well we will be having a couple of months off when the season is finished and just chilling out a bit really. Then we will start thinking about the Houseman prep and KTM for 2010. Next year the BYMX BW series will be our main competition and anywhere within a top six finish would be really good. And we are also thinking about more Euro experience, maybe in the Dutch ONK championship."

**Rage:** Looking at all the performers in this year's various youth championships who do you think has been the overall rider of the year?

**CC:** "I think Conrad Mewse really for rider of the year but Jake Millward is the most improved."

**Rage:** It seems to have been a great year generally Connor but have there been any really big disappointments?

**CC:** "Just one really – my best mate Matthew Callaghan deciding to emigrate to Australia..."

## RISINGSTAR!

DAVID KEET'S CLOSING THE GAP ON HIS 65cc RIVALS AS PREPARES TO MOVE UP TO A SW MACHINE...



**T**here's a bit of a tradition in the Keet family. Young David Keet, who currently lies third in the Red Bull Elite Youth Cup 65cc class, has the same name as his father whose father is also called David. Confusing enough at the best of times – even more so when they all go to the races in the same van!

Young David has progressed well this year and has a motocross heritage that will help him along his way. His dad (the middle David!) used to be a tidy youth rider himself back in the day and his cousin Alan is starting to make a name for himself in the pro ranks too. So motocross really is in the blood of this family.

David started the season well but like the rest of the 65cc class he found himself still some ways off the pace of the new champion Conrad Mewse and his main rival Sid Evans. But as the season has gone on he's started to close the gap and you can see the confidence grow.

We caught up with David going into the final round of the Red Bull EYC championship to get his take on things.

**DBR:** How's the series been for you?

**DK:** "It's been good. I'm now third in the championship and at the last round at Pontrilas I was a lot closer to Sid so I know I'm getting faster. The tracks have been really good and I love it when the pros turn up as well, especially with Alan there as he helps me with lines and stuff a lot. It's been fun and hopefully I'll finish in the top three and maybe get closer to Sid and Conrad at Culham."

**DBR:** So what about next year?

**DK:** "Next year I'm moving up to the SW class and I'm going to be supported by Extreme Kawasaki so I'm excited and really happy to be getting a sponsor. I have to learn how to ride a bigger bike but that will be fun and I will train more. I get my new bikes in two weeks time and I'll start getting used to them straight away."

**DBR:** Sounds cool. Your dad used to race, do you ever listen to him when he talks about racing?

**DK:** "Not really, no [laughs]! I've only ever seen him ride on some DVDs that he has of him when he was younger but he never had jumps and whoops and stuff like we do. He tells me stuff anyway but because he can't ride anymore I listen to Alan a lot because he can ride and show me."

**DBR:** Anyone who has helped you this year who you'd like to put a shout out to?

**DK:** "Yeah. I'd like to say a big thank you to the Grant family at Goldentyre and of course Claudio for all of his hard work changing my tyres, Sammy Doble at MD Racing for all of my UFO race kit, Mick Baker at IMP and all my family."



## GOT A STORY FOR RAGE?

Then contact our Youth Editor Mike Gurney at [mikegurney55@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:mikegurney55@yahoo.co.uk)







# TOSSED...

...ON THE HORNS OF A DILEMMA! BILLY'S GOT HIS TICKETS BOOKED FOR OZ AND AN OFFER FROM CAS HONDA SO WHAT'S IT GONNA BE? DOES HE STAY OR DOES HE GO?

Words by Billy MacKenzie Photo by Sutti

**H**ere's the deal. I've got a Kawasaki contract lying in my printer ready to be signed and faxed off and I've got a phone lying in front of me to call Harry and Neil on to tell them that I'm staying... What would you do?

Well, I'm confused. After speaking to Sean to ask if my interview had gone to print the answer was 'yes! This is tricky – I feel like I'm in a soap opera, leaving you all on a cliff-hanger until the next issue! Dun dun dun!

I'd pretty much made my mind up that I wanted to race in Australia since, well, I dunno – it's been in my head for a while. I guess I kinda started thinking about it while I was injured. Thinking to myself about my possible options with the bad year I've had and it seemed that Oz would be a nice little break to get my s\*\*t together and enjoy riding my bike again. CAS are a top team and with my results they deserved a better rider for 2010. I kinda thought I'd be out of a job, or at least not be on the best machinery to make racing at top level better. But, anyway, most of this is mentioned in my interview so I'll tell ya what's been going on recently...

While I was injured I went to Oz on a little holiday. I love Australia as I mentioned a lot when I came back from my travelling adventure. While I was there I decided I'd check the racing out, see what the championship is like and do a little research on the place. I decided I'd chat to a few of the top teams and see what their thoughts were about me coming over to ride. Initially I set my sights on the Kawasaki team over there – from chatting to my friend Kevin who's involved in racing over there he advised me that the Kawa team was the best team with the coolest people. Troy Carroll's team. So I went and had a chat with Troy and pretty much just told him how my year had went and that I was thinking of racing over there cos I love the place. We exchanged details and that was it pretty much.

I wasn't sure if my little chat was a success or not – he seemed keen but I caught him off guard and they don't really pay attention to the world championships over there. So for him I was just some knobber coming in giving it the big one! He gave me his email but it turned out to be the wrong one so I was a bit suspicious! Anyway, I managed to get in touch with him eventually and started swapping emails, although it did feel like I was the one chasing the whole time! I started to think that maybe it was a bad idea but I had my mind set on going to Oz so I just kept on and on until eventually he started to sound keen!

In the meantime I was still training and stuff trying to get back on track to prove to people that I'm still fast and capable of racing up front – I still had a job to do but this was proving difficult. I'd lost motivation and it felt like so had the team. We were just trying to see the year out the best we could. We'd set goals for comebacks and talked a good race but when it actually came down to it nothing was ready to go. I wasn't fit enough, I hadn't rode the bike enough and still hadn't set my bike up the way I wanted it. Two races back from injury and it was still a disaster – Lierop was a write-off and Duns got cancelled. Both of those races I showed some good speed but not the desire or fitness to keep it going. Then I didn't get picked for the Nations and quite rightly so but it pretty much left me with nothing to go after. Both championships were over, I didn't have a deal as of yet – I was starting to think about going travelling and strawberry picking!

But then things started to take place. I was out riding with Easty at my favourite track doing the motos. They were hard but I was finishing them and that was the main thing.

I started to surround myself with things that made me feel good – like riding tracks I wanted to ride, training how I wanted to train. I started to enjoy going for long runs and training with Dougan's old man. I was doing my house up in Southampton which was making me a little house proud! I got some new carpets and a new bathroom! I started to do a bit of DIY around the house and it kinda took my mind off worrying about racing.

I just started to enjoy my day and each day I went riding was getting better. I started riding with Doogz loads and we'd race our hearts out for a full 40 minutes. My thumb was completely back to normal and I remembered how good it was to finish a 40 and not be completely done in!

Then Brad got injured! I was gutted for him cos he well and truly deserved his ride and I didn't even think about being picked to fill in for him. I had kinda wrote it off and I actually didn't even wanna ride the Nations, I didn't wanna go there and embarrass myself! I had two options – man up and see if I could get the ride or run away to Thailand for my holiday like I did last year! Now trust me when I say this was a hard decision! Most people would say they would love to ride for their country and I don't doubt that for a minute. But in my situation I really wasn't sure. It was a last chance to put my demons to bed and to shut the critics up who have written me off this year. So after a lot of thinking and a lot of phone calls to all my friends for advice I decided to put myself forward and see what happens.

This is the letter I wrote to the ACU...

*'I'd like to put myself forward as the replacement rider for Brad in this year's Nations. As you know I've been injured for most of the year but even with injury I have still been able to run up front at GPs such as Valkenswaard, Bellpuig and even Mallory. In the end I had to take time off to repair my thumb ligament which has seen me off the scene for the last eight weeks.*

*'My last race performance was at Lierop which I'm sure most would agree was not the best race to make a comeback! However, I was up front for the first half of the races and even at Duns I poled qualifying by over two seconds and even led the first race until an unfortunate incident with a back-marker.*

*'I have been selected for Team Britain for the last five years and feel I have the experience to fill the void. My fitness is coming along very well, I was out practising with Eastwood yesterday and completed two 35-minute motos at speed in the deep sand. My thumb is no longer a problem and I can ride without painkillers now. I am continuing my training routine as normal but with extra riding and my speed is no problem at the moment – all I need is the last 10 minutes endurance for the races which I am 100 per cent confident I can achieve in the next two weeks.*

*'Mark has been helping me with riding and training as he really wanted to pick me for the team. He will continue to come riding with me till the end of the season.*

*'Also, from a personal point, I feel more motivated for this race than ever before. With having such a terrible year I want to shut up anyone who has written me off or said I'm over it. I have always represented my country with great pride and passion as everyone knows and I feel there is no better man for the job. I am happy with my bike and the team also have a point to prove. I have been an MX1 rider since 2007 so I know the competition. I know their weaknesses, strengths and I have gained respect within the MX1 field and won't be pushed around.*

*'Being picked to represent my country again would mean everything to me and would give me a last chance to shut the doubters up and do my best for my country.'*

So that was that, I made the decision and I went after it, just like I did the Oz deal. I couldn't easily just book my flight for Thailand but I was feeling that buzz again. I was riding good while out practising and the motos were starting to come easier and easier. With the more time I was spending on the bike, the more I got used to it and I really started to work out all our little problems that I hadn't been able to sort while I was injured.

It took a while for them to get back to me but eventually I was picked and Brian Higgins told me my letter really helped with the decision. Being based down in Southampton again I was finding myself out at the same tracks as UTAG Yamaha and I was also using their practice track which I had to sign on for so Steve Dixon knew I was doing the work and that's why he trusted in the ACU's and his decision to pick me.

I had told CAS that I was going to Oz and they were happy for me – they knew we'd had a bad year and I hadn't really been showing any signs that it was gonna get better. I had been out doing my own thing, riding with Doogz and then I begged Bry to come stay with me for a week leading up to Landrake. Me and Bry work really well together – we trained all winter in '07/'08 and have a cool little family bond – so when I asked for his help he came down and done the work with me.

We went out the weekend before Landrake and did four 40-minute motos in the deep sand just to build up my endurance – it was loads of fun too cos me and Bry push each other round the track just like me and Doogz do. We actually ran our bikes out of fuel a couple times and pushed them all the way back to the van just to be hardcore! We hit the gym, we ate right and we had a laugh too. We went to Henstridge on the Wednesday before Landrake and cut some motos out there too so I felt ready to go for the weekend!

I had been on at Neil to come out testing with me but he had just got back from holiday in Florida and couldn't make the Wednesday but we managed to go out the next day and get some testing done. I kinda got the feeling from Neil that it was a waste of time and that the bike was as good as it was gonna get but I knew there was something missing – I didn't know what but I was determined to find it that day.

It was a nice sunny day and we were all having a laugh together, just like '08! Teasy was there too helping me set things up, Bry was there to bounce ideas off and Neil was setting up maps for the ignition. It was all going good and I really started to get into it. Neil could see I had a different attitude and we made massive progress with the bike.

We changed something quite dramatic and all of a sudden I was pulling one-and-a-half seconds off my lap times! I could see Neil and Teasy getting excited and I started riding the best I've ever rode – I had the track completely dialled in and I was getting everything perfect! We all had a bit of a confused look on our faces at the end of the day and I started making jokes about if they want me to stay all they had to do is ask! Neil was replying with the same tone that if I ride like that then he will! A day later I get a call from Harry offering me a deal for 2010! By this time I had already signed a letter of intent with Kawa in Oz and had my plans firmly set on the idea! I even had my tickets booked!

Then Landrake rolls up and I have a smoking day! I poled it by two seconds and then won the first race after coming from 14th on the first lap! The second race I finished third after looping it out in a grippy corner but even then I was there battling for the lead. So it's all systems go again, I feel I'm back on track and the Nations is the next race. I hope I can pull it out the bag and, even if I don't, I'm gonna enjoy trying!

Hmmm, now shall I pick up the pen or the phone?

*BD 12/11*





## FORCE Helmet: The Champions Choice

When you get to Chad's level, you can wear any lid you want. You've got all the fame, all the championships, all the speed, and the offers from helmet manufacturers just keep on coming. Chad's been a Thor guy forever, but he could've gone a different route when it comes to the most serious piece of equipment he owns. Other riders do. They wear one brand of gear, but opt for a different brand lid.

Chad chose the Force Helmet because it's as serious about performance as he is. Designed and built to exceed the most stringent professional racing standards, the Force Helmet delivers championship level performance, amazing balance, incredible airflow, and serious protection in an extremely lightweight package. Available in 3 unique construction materials, Composite / Superlight / Carbon Fiber, the Force Helmet combines innovative design with advanced materials and state of the art manufacturing to raise the level of performance while lowering the weight.

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